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SKETCHES

MARRIED LIFE.

BY MRS. FOLLEN,

AUTHOR OF "SKEPTIC," "WELL-SPENT HOUR," &c.

Perfect esteem, enlivened by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul;
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence: for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.

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DEDICATED

TO

CHARLES FOLLEN,

BY HIS WIFE.

SKETCHES OF MARRIED LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

"I make a broken delivery of the business."
WINTER'S TALE.

"WALK in ! La ! was it only you, Jerry, that was knocking so loud ? " said Ruth to a trim, brisk little man, as he entered the well-furnished kitchen in which she was employed at her customary work. " And so, Jerry, you have found out, at your house, that riches take to themselves wings, and fly away ; and that a light purse is a heavy curse."

"And what if we have, Ruth ? nobody knows whose turn may come next ; and I should think you might ask a-body to sit down, before you begin to twit him of his misfortunes, or, what is worse, of his friends' ; for I call Mr. Selmar my friend, especially now he is poor."

" Well, well ; do sit down, Jerry, I know it is hard for empty bags to stand upright."

Jerry did not much like the application of the proverb to himself, or his master's purse ; but he loved his ease, and could not resist the offer of a chair from Ruth, who had a power over him, which his philosophy had never enabled him to explain. So he seated himself, as he said, with a look of offended pride, " I did think, Ruth, that you were a more feeling person, and had better manners ; but I have not eat a peck of salt yet with you."

" A peck of nonsense, Jerry ; I do'nt mean any harm, you know ; I am sorry enough for Mr. Selmar, but one must either laugh or cry at such things, and my notion is, it is best to laugh. I can tell you that I respect Mr. Selmar as much as I ever did, and more too, if he has behaved honorably."

" *If* he has behaved honorably ! " repeated Jerry indignantly ; " a likely story, that Mr. Selmar could behave otherwise than honorably. Why he is going to sell everything he has ; give up his elegant lodgings, sell his gig, and his horses, even Robinette, his beautiful saddle-horse ; and, more than all, he means to wait upon himself ; for he told me this morning I must look out for a place,

because he could not afford to keep me. But, come ! I 'm in a great hurry ; do take this note to Miss Amy ; I suppose there is no answer to it, and I can 't stay, either."

" Poh ! Jerry, you always say that. I can tell you that he that's in a hurry, fishes in an empty pond. Here, John," she said to the footman, " carry up this billet to Miss Amy, and tell her that Jerry brought it, and that he is in no hurry at all, and will wait just as long as she pleases for an answer."

" Well, now, if that is n't funny," drawled out Jerry, half vexed and half amused. " I never in all my life saw such a queer woman."

" Never mind, Jerry ; crooked sticks make even fires. But come, tell me all about Mr. Selmar ; has he lost all ? "

" All ! " groaned out Jerry.

" Do folks say any thing against him ? "

" Not a word ; everybody knows that it was brought on by the failure of others who owed him money, and he has given up all he has, and he means to deny himself everything. Why I tell you, Ruth, he means even to part with me."

" May-be that 's the gain of a loss, Jerry ; but that 's acting like a man ; now I respect

him, and if I have a chance I shall befriend him, though it's no more than he ought to do."

"But only think, Ruth, what a hard case it is for him, an only child, and his father died when he was only three years old, and left him such a heap of money; and then he was all the world to his mother: he has never known what hardship is."

"Time he did," said Ruth; "I suppose he has been a sort of fatted calf."

"No such thing; his mother was a pious woman; she taught him to read his Bible, and she kept him out of bad company, and she made all his masters come to him for fear he should get any harm at school."

"The more's the pity. I dare say he thinks he is not made of the same flesh and blood as the rest of the world."

"Oh, but I tell you, Ruth, his mother used to tell him he was, and to teach him not to think too much of himself; I have heard her myself, when I was a boy, and used to go there to do chores."

"An ounce of practice is worth a pound of preaching, Jerry—depend upon it. But, did n't you say that Mr. Selmar's saddle-horse was for sale?"

"Yes I did ; and what's that to you, Ruth ? but may-be Miss Amy wants him ?"

"Every may-be has a may-not-be, Jerry ; but tell me, is he kind and well broke ? "

"I tell no lies, Ruth, not even when I sell a horse. Robinette is as steady as a parson, and he's a lump of good nature. But now do tell me if you don't want him for Miss Amy ? "

"We two can keep a secret when one is away ; all I tell you is, I engage the refusal of the horse."

To this Jerry agreed. John returned to say there was no answer to the note, and Jerry again remembered that he was in a great hurry, and departed, saying, "Well, I must be back in less than no time."

"How shall I manage the business ?" said Ruth to herself ; "when there's a will there's always a way." She could not talk even to herself without a proverb. "Let me see ; Miss Amy is in the breakfast-room ; I have not dusted the pictures yet." In another minute Ruth was apparently very busily employed dusting the pictures. As she stood behind the sofa, where Amy Weston was sitting with a book in her hand, she noticed that she held it upside down.

"I calculate," said Ruth to herself, "that she will not be much the wiser for what she reads this morning. She's only making believe read: well, the honestest folks are not always to be trusted. — Do you expect a great many folks this evening, Miss Amy?"

"No, Ruth, scarcely any body."

"Then I suppose John can tend alone?"

"Certainly, I want no further preparations made than those I have mentioned."

"Just as I thought," said Ruth to herself; "straws show which way the wind blows. She does not value the party now the worth of a pin, and before she got that note she seemed to think of nothing else. I'm sorry for her; there's no herb will cure love." Ruth sighed audibly, as if she had reference to her own experience. "I will," thought she, "try speaking to her about Robinette."

Amy was fully aware of Ruth's loquacity, and had a sort of intuitive knowledge that she was about exercising it upon her at this time, when she was not disposed to indulge her. She rose from her seat with the intention of retiring to her own room; but Ruth was not so easily baffled in her plans.

"Did n't I hear you say, Miss Amy, that you wanted a saddle-horse?"

"Yes, I did say so, Ruth."

"Well, ma'am, I've had one offered to me to-day, that I guess will suit you exactly."

"It seems odd for you and me to be in treaty for a horse, Ruth; I fear we should make but poor jockeys; but who has offered you one?"

"Why you know, ma'am, that poor Mr. Selmar has lost all his money, and he's going to sell off every thing he owns, even Robinette, his beautiful saddle-horse."

"Well, Ruth, and what of that?"

"Why you see, Miss Amy, that Jerry says that Robinette is as good as he is handsome, which is n't always the case; and you see, I've engaged the refusal of him, for I thought he would be just the thing for you."

"Surely, Ruth, you have not done such a thing, and without any direction from me too."

"No harm done, Miss Amy; no one knows who I engaged him for; but I thought you would like Mr. Edward's horse better than any other."

"But I do not wish, Ruth, to bargain for Mr. Selmar's horse; it was very improper in you, Ruth; you must go directly and tell Jerry that you did this without my knowledge, and that I do not want Robinette."

How could you do such a thing?" Amy left the room as she said this.

" Well, if that is n't ridiculous!" said Ruth as soon as she was alone. " I reckon she 's put out with Mr. Edward for not coming this evening, and that is making her so set against his horse, and that 's ridiculous in her ; and I suppose he 's mad because he failed, and so he spites himself by staying at home, and that 's ridiculous in him ; and here am I meddling with what 's none of my business, and that 's more ridiculous than all ; and what 's the worst of the whole, Jerry will get the laugh at me, if he finds it out. True enough, one fool makes many. He made such a palaver too about the horse ; I 'll be bound he 's not such a terrible good horse, after all. I mean to tell him as much when I see him. I never saw Miss Amy so put out before. Somehow or other it makes one feel more ugly to see such a pretty spoken person as Miss Amy out of sorts, than it does one of your real crabbed folks. The sweetest wine makes the sharpest vinegar, as Aunt Polly used to say. Well, I must go to Mr. Selmar's, and tell Jerry I don't want his horse—good, bad, or indifferent."

Ruth was soon at Mr. Selmar's door.

"Well Ruth who'd a thought of seeing you again so soon!" exclaimed Jerry, as he opened it to her.

"Why you see, Jerry, second thoughts are best; and I have come to the conclusion that I wo'n't have any thing to do with your horse: I guess there are enough others as good as he any day."

"So, Miss Amy wo'n't take him," replied Jerry; "I can tell her that she'll not get many such horses as Robinette for love or money."

"Why what had Miss Amy to do with it? I tell you, Jerry, that it is I, do n't want the horse. I went all on my own hook; but as for your thinking Robinette is such a wonder, you know, Jerry, that you always think your crows are white."

"But I can tell you, Ruth, that I do n't half like being served so by you; you make me look very cheap to Mr. Selmar. I have just told him that I'd e'en a'most sold Robinette."

"E'en a'most and very nigh, save many a lie, Jerry. I do n't want the horse, and that's the long and the short on't. Mr. Selmar is not at home, is he?"

"Yes he is," said Mr. Selmar, who happened just then to be passing through the

hall, and recognized her voice. Ruth brushed by Jerry, and greeted him with a most vehement shake of the hand.

"How are you, Ruth? and how is Miss Amy?" he said, as he returned it with equal cordiality.

"None the better for you, Mr. Edward; why have you not been to see for yourself how she is?"

"You must have heard, Ruth, of my misfortunes; I have been too busy to visit."

"I should think you might have found a few minutes for old friends."

"You know, Ruth, that there is no place where I so well love to be as at your house; but I have not been good company for anybody."

"Speak well, but do better. It's not doing as you would be done by, to stay away from old friends when you are in trouble. Stars shine in the night, Mr. Edward."

"Very true, Ruth; but tell me something of Miss Amy,—is she well?"

"Why, well enough, only rather dumpish for her. But did you not send a refusal to her party? I should n't wonder if she was affronted; for when I said something to her about buying your horse which Jerry recom-

mended, why she looked as if I'd advised her to buy a hornet's nest. And I know she'd be angry with me if she knew I had told you of this; but, somehow or other, I could not help it now, Mr. Edward."

"Thank you! thank you, Ruth! now is the time to find out one's true friends."

"Ruth is right," said Edward to himself, after she left him. "It is not doing as I would be done by. I have not acted with that simple-hearted trust which such a noble-minded being as Amy ought to inspire. Shall I suspect her of what I should despise myself for? I have not lost anything in my own eyes, why should I in hers? — But am I certain that she loved me? We have exchanged no vows, we have never uttered the word; but have we not understood each other? When together we drank in the sublime glories of Niagara, and felt that its everlasting flow was but a faint image of our own souls, that could be satisfied only with the Infinite; then did we not know that we loved each other? When our hearts have glowed with rapture at the thought of relieving the oppressed, and with indignation against tyranny; then did not our souls grow into each other's likeness? And is not this love? holy

love! and ought it not to cast out fear? What has kept me from her at this time? pitiful pride, low-born fear. I will go to her: I must see Amy; but I must not ask her to marry a beggar. Her father! how I dread to see him! I am nothing now in his eyes: I could despise him, if he were not her father."

CHAPTER II.

“ My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man.” TEMPEST.

THE next morning Edward called at Mr. Weston’s. He found Amy at home, and alone.

“ Edward! Mr. Selmar! I am very glad to see you; why have you staid away so long?”

“ Surely, Amy, you know what has occupied me; I have now to learn the cold virtues of prudence, and self-denial; and my first lesson, perhaps, ought to be to forego the pleasure of your society.”

Edward looked embarrassed, agitated, and unhappy, as he said this.

“ Would you,” replied Amy, “ resign your friends because you have lost your money?”

“ A beggar must not expect to have friends: I have been a spoiled child: they tell me that I have now to learn what it is to be a

poor man; but I did not intend to speak of myself, or my affairs to you."

"These sentiments are unworthy of you, Edward. If money has had anything to do with our regard for each other, it is well it should part us; otherwise, why this apprehension now? I thought we were friends, Edward."

Amy's color rose as she said this: she was aware that she had gone farther than the conventional creed of the world might authorize; she had spoken simply from her heart. Edward seized her hand; it was in vain for him to attempt to hide any longer all that was in his heart. He confessed all his hopes, all his fears, so long cherished; his intended self-denial was suddenly overcome.

From that moment, what were riches to her, or poverty to him? To those who have never truly loved, who have never had this full mysterious harmony of souls awakened within them, this question will excite a smile; but, thanks be to the great Source of all true love, there are many, very many of the rich as well as the poor, whose hearts will understand and respond to it.

Amy and Edward knew that they had

now one severe trial to encounter, and they wisely resolved to meet it at once. They knew that Mr. Weston would be greatly displeased at his daughter's engaging herself to a man who had no property.

"What shall I say to your father?" asked Edward.

"Tell him the whole truth," replied Amy.

"Yes; but he will be deeply offended."

"Very like; but we must bear that patiently, and let him see that in all that is right we will conform to his wishes."

"I will see him at once," said Edward, "and tell him that, although I have sought your affection, I do not ask for your hand till I have earned the means of supporting you. He must not suspect me of the baseness of wishing to depend upon him for my subsistence... Cannot I see him now?"

"He is not at home," replied Amy; "but you can see him this evening;" and they parted till then.

Strange as it may seem, it was a relief to them both to be separated for a while. The first moment of perfect certainty that we are beloved by the object of our deepest affections, falls on our souls with an oppressive power. The religious mind at such a time longs to be

alone with the Father of spirits. A true and pure love cannot be spoken in all its fulness. It is by faith in that which is invisible and unexpressed ; it is through our own deep consciousness, that we know how we are loved by another. The heart involuntarily rises to that Being who can penetrate the depths of its love, and it is in his presence alone at such moments that it seems to breathe freely and calmly. So felt Amy and Edward when they parted this morning.

Amy's father was, and he prided himself upon being a man of the world. He also prided himself upon being what is called a moral man ; and he was one, if morality be that cold system of expediency which is sometimes all that is meant by the words, "a good moral man." He thought that religion was a very good thing to keep the people in order ; without this safeguard, the poor, and all those unfortunate beings who have none of the good things of this life, would be dangerous to those who have an abundance ; and that they must be bribed into submission by the promise of a large reversion in the life to come. He believed in a just Providence, because he was himself provided for. The opinion of what he called the respectable

part of the community, by which he always meant the rich and powerful, was the standard by which he graduated all his views. He piqued himself upon his skill in avoiding to commit himself upon any important or questionable subject till the opinion of the wise in their generation had settled it. If anything ever betrayed him into a violation of this strict mental neutrality, and an argument was brought up against him, he would directly quote some high authority in defence of the opinion he had ventured to advance. His only very decided conviction was, that money was the chief good.

Amy fully understood her father's character ; she dreaded the result of Edward's confession to him. She bravely resolved to speak first to him herself, and thus share and perhaps abate some of the indignation which she knew otherwise would fall entirely on his head. Amy possessed a peculiarly free and fearless mind ; her nature had instinctively rebelled against the narrowness and slavishness of her father's mode of thinking. She had early learned to think for herself. By her mother's death she had been placed, at the age of fourteen, at the head of her father's family. He was rich ; she was his only

child, and he was proud of her; and the darling hope of his heart was, that his daughter should form what he considered a suitable connexion, whenever she married.

What saved Amy in this trying situation? what made her, what is said to be

“The thing that’s most uncommon,
A reasonable woman?”

Partly the reaction of that saving principle in our natures which God has so mercifully implanted, that makes the tyrant the promoter of freedom, and the selfish and narrow the teachers of an enlarged philanthropy. It was partly this, but principally the religious education she received from her mother. It was interwoven with her earliest thoughts, associated with her childish recollections, and the first consciousness of her own nature, and its high destiny. The religious character of Amy’s mind, as it had been formed by her mother’s life, so had it been hallowed and sealed by her death. Her father had never understood the treasure he possessed in his daughter; how should he? he had never understood her mother.

When Amy had resolved that it was right that she should be the first to meet her

father's anger, she allowed no false shame, no selfish fears to influence her for a moment. As soon as he returned from his walk, she went to his room.

"My dear Amy," said he, as she seated herself by him in the sofa, "why were you so zealous in your defence of Miss Treville last evening?"

"Because, father, I thought the censures that were passed upon her were unjust."

"But, Amy, I can assure you that the most respectable part of the company thought otherwise."

"I only expressed my own opinion, you know, father; and I thought it right to do so, especially as she was not there to defend herself. But, father, you know all the circumstances of that affair, and know how blameless she was: did not you think she did right?"

"May be so, and may be not; but the opinion of the world is never to be slighted, Amy; the wisest and best condemn her, and that's enough for me. I do not pretend to be so much wiser than all the rest of the world."

Amy felt that this was an unfavorable moment for her confession; but she bravely began.

"I have come, my dear father, to speak with you upon a subject of great interest—of great importance—"

Amy stopped; she could not make out a finished sentence. Who can, when they speak of what is more than life or anything that life has to offer. She looked down, and then looked up into her father's face with that earnest imploring look that seems to say, "Oh, if you could read my heart!" She thought of her mother to whom she could have spoken with so much ease, so much trust: her eyes filled with tears.

"What is it you would say, my dear child?" said her father, tenderly.

Amy was encouraged. She began again.

"You have, perhaps, observed the friendship, the intimacy, the particular regard Edward Selmar and I have long had for each other."

"I do not know what you mean by particular regard, Amy. I have seen Mr. Selmar here very often; I supposed you thought very well of him; he has stood very well in the opinion of the world, I believe."

"He has this morning declared his love for me, father."

Had Amy told her father that some one

had threatened her life, he could not have expressed more horror and indignation than he did at this intelligence.

"He! Amy—he, a beggar, a bankrupt, presume to declare his love to my daughter! he, without a cent in the world, dare to think of marrying you, who are an heiress! He is a man without principle, or he has lost his senses."

"When he came here this morning, father, he had no intention of making such a declaration to me."

"And how came he to do such a dishonorable thing?" exclaimed Mr. Weston, stopping for a moment his violent strides across the room, to take breath. "Did he suppose I was going to marry my daughter to a man without a dollar in his pocket? I did, I confess, think better of him once."

"Edward has done nothing wrong, father; our attachment has existed for a long time, though we have never spoken of it. He saw in his failure a reason for separating himself from me, and relinquishing hopes which he before cherished, and which I had tacitly encouraged."

"And that would have been acting like a man of honor; and why has he done so

shameful a thing as to speak to you upon this subject now? Why, if he is what you suppose him to be, did he not sacrifice his feelings to a sense of duty?"

"Because he discovered that I was not willing that he should make this sacrifice."

"You, Amy! *you* not willing! This surpasses belief. You, a lady, so far set at defiance female delicacy as to say *you* were not willing he should make this sacrifice! did I hear right?"

"Yes, father, I did not disguise from him the truth that he would sacrifice my happiness as truly as his own by so doing. He discovered, for I did not attempt to hide it from him, that I loved him as truly as he loved me. The truth is, that I saw in his failure a sufficient reason for a degree of frankness, that, but for his misfortunes, I might have thought forwardness. So you see, father, if there was any one to blame, it was I."

"Romantic nonsense," cried her father, "absurd folly! what would the world say to it?" and he strode about the room as if he would fain run away from its fearful voice.

"I could not think of the world, father, at such a time; and I could not consent that

the world should have any voice in choosing me a husband."

"Nor that your father should either, I suppose ;" said Mr. Weston, almost foaming with anger.

"Forgive me, dear father," replied Amy, "I should be a great hypocrite if I were to pretend that I could be governed by any one's authority in such a case ; though it would make me very unhappy that you should disapprove of my choice."

"I can assure you that I do entirely disapprove of your choice ; and I can tell you that all the most respectable part of the community will think very ill of Mr. Selmar, unless you tell them of your unparalleled piece of quixotism. I always thought that your ridiculous romantic notions would be your ruin ; and I cannot think it very honorable in Mr. Selmar to take advantage of your folly, and to propose marriage to you, now that he has not a cent he can call his own."

"He has done no such thing, father ; he is coming to see you this evening, to tell you that he should never speak of marriage, till he was again able to support me."

Mr. Weston was somewhat mollified by this intelligence. Still he continued striding

across the room, and manifesting great vexation. “ I hate these long engagements ; very tedious and disagreeable.”

“ But, father,” said Amy, “ I shall be the longer with you ; you do n’t want to part with me, though you do think me so silly and romantic.”

“ I did hope, Amy, that whenever you were married, you would form such a connexion as would have gratified me ; all my ambition centred in you.”

“ Did you disapprove of Mr. Selmar, father, before he failed ? ”

“ May be so, and may be not ; I do now, at any rate.”

“ There was nothing, I hear, dishonorable in his failure : I was attached to him before his misfortune ; why should I not be now ? ”

“ I tell you, this is all romance. You have been so educated that you cannot be happy without those luxuries which money alone can procure. You will understand what nonsense there is in the saying, *Ils s’aiment comme les pauvres.* ” .

“ I have always thought, father, that this saying granted to the poor what was worth more than all riches.”

After a long silence, Mr. Weston stopped

short rather abruptly, directly before Amy. "One thing," he said, "I shall insist upon, Amy, if I do consent to this engagement; and that is, that it shall be kept a profound secret, till Mr. Selmar has so far succeeded in business that he may appear a suitable match for my daughter."

"I am sorry, my dear father, that I cannot please you even in this."

"And why not, Miss?"

"Because I should be a deceiver, and lead people to suppose that my hand and heart are disengaged when they are not."

"And of what consequence is it, whether the world knows or not, that you are engaged? It is not very modest in you to suppose this affair is of so much importance to others. I should think a lady of truly refined feelings would prefer it should be kept secret."

"It is natural, father, that it should seem so to you; but I have reasons for wishing otherwise, which I would rather not give to any one; but you have a right to know the whole. It is better that I should seem faulty to you, than actually do wrong."

"And pray what may these very cogent reasons be?"

"I may, and I think it very probable I shall, have proposals of marriage from others, if it is supposed I am disengaged."

"It is very presuming in you to take this for granted ; but suppose you should, you are not bound to accept them."

"Why should I give unnecessary pain ? I am your only child, and you are rich, and there are a number of young men very attentive to me, and one who I fear loves me. He is the son of your friend, Mr. Raymond."

"The very thing I most desired in this world," interrupted her father ; "a suitable match in every respect ; his father is one of our first men. Oh, Amy, you might make me so happy ! why cannot you give up that foolish fancy of yours, and marry him ?" Mr. Weston stood looking in Amy's face as if life and death hung upon her answer.

"Simply, father, because I do not love him, and I do love Mr. Selmar."

"Love Mr. Selmar ! how can you utter such a thing to me — to your father ?"

"Because you are my father, and I must speak plainly to you. Would it not be wrong not to save young Raymond the pain and mortification of a refusal ?"

"Has he ever spoken to you on this subject ?"

"No; but I am almost certain that he will."

"Well, when he does so it will be time enough to tell him of this unlucky entanglement."

"Would that be honorable? would it be generous? would it be even modest? Surely, father, you cannot thus advise your daughter! It could be only painful to me to receive a declaration of love from one whose love I do not return. It is only simple justice to prevent it, and the easiest way to do this is to let it be known that my hand and heart are pledged to another."

"This is very sentimental, to be sure; but how do you know that your feelings will not change? or that Mr. Selmar's may not? It may be many years before you can be married."

"I must," replied Amy, "act according to my present convictions; and I am as certain of my own feelings and determinations as of my existence."

Mr. Weston saw that it was in vain to attempt to influence his daughter upon a subject involving what she considered a moral principle. He tried to persuade himself that she was wrong; still he could not help re-

specting her. His daughter did in fact possess an influence over him that might seem strange to those who have never estimated the power felt, even when not understood, which a high uncompromising allegiance to principle exercises over those who acknowledge no higher standard than the opinion of the world.

Amy had succeeded in her purpose of saving Edward from many painful remarks from her father. In his interview with him in the evening, Mr. Weston told him, very coldly, that his daughter had explained to him their relation to each other; that as he had not been consulted by either of them, there was nothing left for him to say; that whatever sentimentalists might think, or poets might sing about love in a cottage, people now-a-days had more sense, and knew that such notions were absurd. Such nonsense might sound well in novels, but all the respectable part of the community would vindicate him in his determination, that his daughter should not marry a man who could not support her in the way in which she had been accustomed to live. "I therefore trust to you, Sir, as a man of honor, that you will not speak to my daughter of marriage till that is the case."

This Edward assured him was his purpose ; but, though he expected nothing better, he felt galled and fretted when he actually experienced how much his importance was diminished by the loss of his property. Mr. Weston's whole manner was changed towards him ; it was distant, and supercilious, and entirely unlike what it had been before his failure. He was now a poor man.

"No matter," said he to himself, as he left Mr. Weston's apartment. "These lessons to my self-love are very wholesome. Poverty is a good touch-stone ; how much more suffering than all I have endured from her worldly-minded father, would not one smile from Amy chase away !"

In her society we will therefore leave him, to recover his composure.

CHAPTER III.

“But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest.”

AS YOU LIKE IT.

“COME, dear Amy, I will spare your blushes, and save you the trouble of telling me why you sent for me this morning; so compose yourself, while I take off my bonnet and shawl, and then I am ready to hear the whole story. I met Edward Selmar in the hall, and he looked so provokingly happy, and had such a tell-tale face, and such a cousin-like manner towards me, that he has not left you much to tell.”

All this was said by Fanny Herbert to her cousin, as she entered the room in a hurried manner, and with her face all glowing with emotion.

“I am too deeply happy, dear Fanny, to be discomposed,” said Amy; “and I am afraid I shall not be sentimental enough even to blush to your satisfaction.”

“That is just like you, Amy; and I dare

say that you would behave exactly so, if you were going to be executed instead of going to be married."

"I hope," replied Amy, laughing, "that you do not think it a parallel case."

"Why, not exactly, in all respects; but it has many points of resemblance. When a woman promises herself away in marriage, she resigns her name, her property, her affections, her opinions, her friends, perhaps her country, her will—in short, herself, to her future lord and master."

"No wonder," replied Amy, "that, with these ideas of matrimony, you expect me to be agitated; but I do not acknowledge that I have made such a surrender as this."

"Let me see, Amy; out of your own mouth, I will prove that you have. You resign your name."

"Yes; but a name is of no consequence."

"Your property will be his as soon as you are married, unless you have it legally settled upon yourself beforehand."

"You know that I have, in my own right, only the small property my mother left me; and Edward would not choose, even if my father would consent to it, to owe his support to any one. But I agree, Fanny, that the

law is unjust, with regard to married women, upon the subject of property; it puts them upon a par with children."

"Your opinions will be no longer free. You must think as your husband thinks, or not think at all, or else there is no peace in the house. One must always yield, and of course it must be the wife."

"I do not acknowledge this, Fanny. Where opinions deserve the name, they must be free. Married people are very like to hold the same opinions on the most important subjects, especially where there has been a perfect understanding of each other's most intimate thoughts before marriage, and where there exists a recognition of their perfect equality afterwards. But, even if we differ, Edward and I agree that there can be no slavish submission, where a true love exists. We well know that this is a heterodox faith, but upon it we rest our hopes of happiness."

"A rope of sand, my dear Amy, that you are trusting to, rely upon it. But to proceed with my catechising: you have promised your heart exclusively to him."

"I could not promise to give what was no longer my own to bestow. My heart was

his, and I confessed it ; but this is only a fair exchange."

"If he does not happen to like your friends, you must give them up."

"I made no vow to violate my conscience or my feelings. Any encroachment that even Edward Selmar should make upon the freedom of my affections would be certainly followed by a diminution of my love for himself. I feel sure that he would despise any homage that was not freely offered."

"Your place of residence : he may carry you where he chooses."

"The place of our abode, as well as other subjects involving duty and happiness, would be decided by mutual agreement ; but here I confess the law is against me."

"But your will : you have no longer a will of your own."

"I cannot will to resign my will. It is a contradiction in terms ; it is destroying the cause by the effect."

"A very philosophical conclusion, truly, and sounding remarkably well, all that you say, my dear ; not very Miltonian though ; but wait till you are Mrs. Selmar, and see if you do not sing a different tune then. Submission — that is the motto for a married

woman's story ; it is the first, second, and third requisite for perfection in the good wife, as you, of course, intend to be. So do not flatter yourself, Amy, that you will ever have your own way again."

"But, suppose, Fanny, that his way should be my way ; there would be no submission then on either side."

"That reminds me," said Fanny, "of the German couplet we learned the other day :

'O, wunderbare Harmonie!
Was er will, will auch sie.'*

Rely upon it, when you disagree, (and that will happen,) you must always yield, right or wrong."

"I do not grant this. If Edward should ever wish me to do wrong, I shall not feel bound to comply, but think I do him more honor by a refusal, than by a submission for which I am sure he would and ought to despise me."

"Very pretty, and apparently very just, Amy ; but let us see by-and-by. You are so heartily in love with Edward now, that you cannot think he will ever desire any thing wrong ; but he is a man, and he is human."

* O, wonderful harmony !
What he wills, wills also she.

"So I supposed, when I engaged to marry him. I do not think either of us expect perfection."

"But, if I were you, I should, as long as possible, require it of him, and insist upon his thinking me nothing short of divine. Now is your time, Amy ; make the most of your short reign."

"O, Fanny ! Fanny ! I hate to hear you talk so. If it were only girlish rattle, I would laugh at it, and forget it ; but I fear that there is something seriously wrong at the bottom of it all. I fear that you are now trifling with your own happiness, as well as that of another, under the influence of these unworthy notions. It was to speak to you upon this subject, that I wanted to see you this morning."

"And so," replied Fanny, "while I flattered myself that you had sent for me to tell me a very pretty love story of your own, and that I was to be that important personage, a confidant, upon the occasion, and know the month and the day when nobody else did, you, forsooth, only sent for me to favor me with a lecture, followed, I suppose, by some of those agreeable didactic remarks, which most of my kind friends are pleased so gratuitously to bestow upon me."

"Are you not ashamed of such nonsense, Fanny?"

"Ashamed of nonsense, Amy! Why, I am in love with it. It is as important as my daily bread to me. All other pleasures, all other friends, are uncertain, unfaithful; but nonsense always more than fulfils its promise, and is an unfailing help in adversity."

"I have no objection to nonsense, Fanny, in its right place; but there are occasions where trifling is a sin — where we should be guided only by reason and conscience."

"Well, Amy, do n't look so very sober, and I will be good for a little while, for your sake. I love you well enough to tolerate the presence of reason, if she does not bring her knitting-work, and invite herself to pass the whole day with me. What would reason say to me now, Amy?"

"Reason would ask," said Amy, "whether, you are acting right towards William Roberts. You understand me now, Fanny."

"O, yes, perfectly well, Amy; I see what you are after. Excuse me; you remind me of the fox, who, having been unluckily caught in a trap, and there curtailed of some of his honors, (pardon this atrocious pun,) cunningly called together the other foxes of

his acquaintance, and advised them, seriously, with their eyes open, and of their own free will, to submit to the same cruel operation which a sad chance had inflicted upon him. Thank you, my dear Amy ; when I am also caught, I will certainly take counsel of you."

" Try to be serious, Fanny. I have something to tell you that I think you have too much heart to laugh at."

" Well, now, Amy, I will be as solemn and well-behaved as if I was just engaged."

" I hear from Edward," said Amy, " that your friend, William Roberts, is going to Europe."

Fanny started. " Going to Europe ! Why, it was but a short time since, that he told me that he should never again leave his own country ; and he said some pretty things about his untravelled heart, &c. What is he going for ? "

" To get rid of an aching heart, if he can, and, if possible, recover a healthful tone of mind."

Fanny's face reddened all over, and then grew very pale. She tried in vain to hide her emotions at this intelligence.

" I am sorry," said Amy, " to see you suffer ; but the remedy is in your own hands."

“What can I do? What would you have me do?”

“Be simple — be true.”

“And ask him to please not go to Europe, but to stop and marry me! I would die first.”

“I would have you do nothing unfeminine — nothing inconsistent with your true dignity; but I would have you faithfully question your own heart, and then be true to yourself and to him. From what I know of your real feelings towards Mr. Roberts, I fear you have coquettled with him; and forgive me, Fanny, if I say that it will be happy for you, if some sacrifice of your pride is the only punishment you receive. It is, surely, no slight suffering, that can make such a man willing to give up his country, and change all his habits of life. Edward agreed with his friend, that it was impossible that you could really love him; and surely, Fanny, if I did not think your fault was mere levity, I could hardly forgive you. He intends going in a few days.”

Poor Fanny sat like one condemned. Amy continued:

“It was his intention to go away without seeing you again; he thought the interview would be too painful for him; but I told

Edward to urge him to go and say farewell to you ; for I knew that in your heart, Fanny, you loved him."

Fanny made a great effort to recover her self-command, and, after a minute, said, "I shall certainly try to dissuade him from quitting his country, if he should come to see me." Her lips quivered, as she uttered this *if*.

" Beware, dear Fanny, of the effect of what you say now to William Roberts. You cannot now gloss over to your conscience any questionable act. You know to what point he loves you. If you do not truly love him—if you do not mean to marry him, do not attempt to influence him in any way ; do not tempt him or yourself by the tantalizing profession of a dangerous friendship, that may or may not be love. Be simple—be true-hearted, as you value your future peace of mind."

Fanny soon rose to go home. As they parted, Amy kissed her tenderly, and said, " All will be well, dear Fanny, if you are only true to yourself."

" How is it, Amy," replied Fanny, as she hastily brushed away a tear, " that I still love you so well, when you make me feel so cheap, and look so silly ? "

CHAPTER IV.

How oft when at the court of love
Concealment is the fashion,
When *Howd'y'do* has failed to move,
Good-bye reveals the passion.

A few days after her interview with Fanny, Amy received the following letter from her.

My dear philosophical Cousin,

As the weather prevents my seeing you to-day, I must e'en indite a little epistle to you ; for I have too many things on my heart to keep them to myself.

I took your advice, and did not put on any airs when Roberts came to take leave of me. I was a perfect Miranda ; I was sorry, very sorry for all my naughtiness to him ; I did not tell him that though ; but, somehow or other I think he found it out. I told him I was very sorry that he was going away, and that made him very glad ; and — but you will easily guess all the rest — we of course had a little scene. But, Amy, do not think I

found it easy to be so very good. I was tempted sorely when I saw how pleased he was at my regret at his departure, I wanted dreadfully to tease him just a very little in revenge for having obliged me to make such a sacrifice of my pride ; but I did not. I was really good all the time ; I was as good as our friend Mrs. Lovell, or Loveall as I call her, who, you know, says Sir to her husband, and my dear, to every body else. She will patronize me now, I have no doubt, as Mr. Roberts is very rich.

Well I have not told you the worst of it yet, Amy. I have not only had the indiscretion to let Mr. Roberts find out that I loved him, but I have, if you will believe t, promised to marry him, as your Ruth says right away, in no time. This I like, however ; I could never behave well through a long courtship. Old father Jacob, I am sure, deserved all his honors and far better wives than he obtained as a reward for waiting so long for each of them. I certainly should not be worth waiting seven months, nor even seven weeks for, I fear. It is hardly fair that I should marry William Roberts. He thinks me better than I am ; but the more I tell him so, the more he will not believe it. Poor

fellow ! I hope he will not repent when it is too late. I feel, dear Amy, like a Scotch song, half gay, half sad.

What ails this heart o' mine ?

What ails this watery ee ?

I tell you, Amy, William Roberts is too good for me. If I could only just discover some little fault in him, I should not feel so badly about marrying him. I should not feel so like a cheat. What if he should come to the same conclusion after we are married, and there is no help for it? What if he should cease to love me, when he finds just what I am ; when he becomes acquainted with my fidgetty, irritable temper ? What should I do then ? Can I, Amy, always hope to hide my weaknesses from him ? I must try. I shall be happier with him than I have ever been before, and he is a pattern of patience, I know.

There is no help for it now ; married we are to be as soon as all the ridiculous preparations can be made which must precede this catastrophe. I love him ; I always have loved him better than anything in this blessed life : there are but two things that can be named against him ; one is his over-estimate

of me ; the other is he is too proper, too polite. You have before you, Amy, a far easier task than I have ; you have only to be, I have to seem excellent. I began with the intention of writing just a little note to you ; but somehow or other I can never be satisfied with a few words especially with you, dear Amy : this is one of my faults, and the cause of many others. Roberts, however, is a silent man ; so it is fortunate that I can talk, especially when we have company. If he could only be induced to talk more, perhaps I should not find him so very, very wise. I often think that the only difference between the wise and simple, so called, is that while the one talks out all his or her folly, the other prudently hides it by saying nothing. It is evident I am no such hypocrite as this. One thing, dear Amy, I have never yet told you, and that is how truly and how tenderly I love you.

Truly yours,

FANNY HERBERT.

Amy immediately replied to her cousin's letter.

Dear Fanny,

Thank you for your long note. I rejoice at its contents ; I rejoice with my whole heart

that you were frank and upright with Mr. Roberts, when he came to take leave of you. There can be no true dignity in falsehood of any kind, and there is always ground for suspicion that what we hide we are ashamed of; surely you cannot be ashamed of returning the love of such a man as William Roberts.

If I could think you in earnest when you say you wanted to tease Mr. Roberts, I could not forgive you; but I believe no such thing. You are only playing off a little bravado, venting some of your superfluity of naughtiness upon me, in revenge for being obliged, in self-defence, to be good to him.

I like your comparison of the old Scotch song. The deepest fountains of our nature are all unsealed when two hearts pledge themselves to each other in mutual love. Pleasure, pain, hope, fear, strange tumult, unutterable peace, alternately sweep over our new strung souls, awakening there a latent music that is like a reminiscence from a higher state of being; like the Lord's song in a strange land; a mingled sound of heavenly joy, and earthly sadness.

And no wonder, dear Fanny, that we are so deeply moved. To have made ourselves,

as far as our influence goes, responsible for the happiness and virtue of a fellow-being, is a startling thought ; but when it is the happiness of one whom we love better than all the world beside, the soul almost shrinks with fear from the venture. Yet, is not this the only right view of this connexion ? How shall we make ourselves equal to these things ? From whence shall we derive help and strength for the faithful performance of these great duties — whence but from the Eternal Source of our being ?

Love must have the religious principle in it, or it is not true love. It must be self-forgetting, self-sacrificing, infinite in its desires, infinite in its purposes, infinite in its joys,—or it is not true love.

I did not intend to preach a sermon, when I began ; but I could not refrain from the expression of my feelings to you who have been my playfellow and companion from my childhood to the present time. Now especially that our hearts are throbbing with kindred emotions, I could not help pouring out my feelings and thoughts to you, just as I always have done, as if you were my sister.

We will not allow this new attachment to supplant the affection that we have always

felt for each other. We will prove the truth of what I have always believed, that the more we love, the more we may love, if it is not a narrow and selfish attachment.

I have been so much in earnest that I have forgotten to banter you, as I intended, upon your abuse yesterday of matrimony ; but never mind, Fanny, you know my creed is, Better change your mind every day, than continue one day in a wrong opinion. I will be generous, and forget what you have said, as you have repented so truly and so soon.

Yours ever,

AMY WESTON.

CHAPTER V.

“Words! words! words!”

HAMLET.

ALL the world knows that there is no calculating about affairs of the heart ; yet all have an opinion, and decide upon them as though they were subject to fixed laws ; and although men and women will marry to please themselves, yet the public will judge of such things as though it was their particular business, and they were the party concerned. Every one said, when they heard of the engagement of the two cousins, What a pity it is, that they could not change lovers ! Mr. Roberts is so calm and reasonable — he is so prudent, and has such an excellent judgment — he is reserved and silent ; so is Amy Weston ; they seem made for each other ; — while Mr. Selmar is so excitable — rather hasty — something of an enthusiast — very frank and talkative, I should have thought that he and Fanny Herbert would have been sure to fancy each other.

Now, as is generally the case, the world (that many-eyed but short-sighted personage) was partly right and mainly wrong. It was true, that Amy and Roberts both possessed a remarkable quietness of manner. With Mr. Roberts, it was the effect of a deep-rooted pride, that would have considered it a departure from his dignity to be agitated; not because self-control was a virtue, but because it was graceful, and was a proof of power and superiority, not to be moved as other people are. He was a man of strong passions and generous emotions; but he kept them all in subjection to an artificial standard of excellence of his own raising. There was a reserve—a want of freedom in him, which had its origin in a want of faith in himself and in others.

Amy had the same calm and self-collected manner; but it arose from a different principle. She never thought of the effect of it upon others; she was unconscious of the power it gave her; she “wist not that her face shone.” Edward Selmar, to whom she was engaged, it is true, differed from herself in all externals. He was frank and talkative; she was as frank when she did speak, but apt to be silent. He had an excitable, ardent temperament;

in her the elements were so harmoniously blended, that all the Christian graces were more natural and easy to her. But, in all essential principles, they were strictly united. The deep under currents of their souls seemed to flow from kindred sources, and mingle together in harmony. Selmar's nature led him to commit many faults, but he was ever ready to confess and amend them.

Fanny, who, by her wit, her beauty, and her many nameless attractions, had captivated Mr. Roberts, was so made up of faults and excellences — was so whimsical — so apt to do wrong — so sure to be sorry for it — so unkind in her actions at one time — so magnanimous at another — so without a principle of right, and yet so full of all good things by nature, that one might as well attempt to catch and analyze a jack o' lantern as to describe her. She was, however, the only being in the world who had succeeded in destroying Mr. Roberts' self-control, and causing his prudence to be questioned.

As soon as a house could be furnished, and all the fashionable paraphernalia for a bride provided, Fanny and Mr. Roberts were married.

Next to the barbarity of the pomp and cir-

cumstance of funerals, comes that of the formalities and shows at weddings. It will be said by some, "Is it not a fit time for a festival, when two loving hearts are united?" Surely, if it be a heart-felt festival; but have our wedding visits and wedding parties this character? It is dress—dress; there is no heart in it. The bride and bridegroom, if they really love each other, cannot be interested in such empty show. Life has a new and a more deep reality to them. They can sympathize only in what is simple and true.

All the world had assembled to pay their compliments to the new-married couple. Edward Selmar was standing by Amy Weston: he looked dejected. "If we are ever married, Amy," he said to her, "we will not have such a foolish parade as this. How intolerable it must be to Roberts and Fanny! The tears are hardly dry upon poor Fanny's cheek, which the ceremony called forth. She looks like a victim. I think there is more sense in doing as a couple did, who came into a clergyman's house where I was visiting the other evening. The man said, as he entered, 'We have been calculating, sir, a good while, to be married; and we thought,

as we were going by this evening, we would just stop in, and be made man and wife.' ”

“ I cannot say,” replied Amy, “ that I should fancy that way, though I do not like this. We must not do as Dr. —— used to say some folks did — stand so upright as to bend backwards.”

“ Do, Amy, look at Roberts, among all those fashionables; he looks in a sort of maze. There goes Mrs. Lovell, to congratulate him. How patronizing she looks! How foolish he appears. She is making much of him. Deliver me from being patronized by her ! ”

“ Never fear, till you ride in your own coach again. She patronizes no one who goes afoot, or who is not distinguished in some way or other. The sanction of public opinion is necessary to secure her attentions.”

“ I detest such a character.”

“ It deserves more to be pitied. She shows that she has a very low estimate of the value of her own opinion — that she does not judge for herself. She does not value her own honest thought even as much as we value it. She is, in the main, kind-hearted, and would be good, if she only had the courage to be so.”

"It is all worldly-mindedness and ambition. I am sick of it. How much longer do you mean to stay, Amy?"

"Do not you remain any longer, if you wish to go, Edward." Amy spoke very kindly, but Edward's mind was out of tune.

"It is not so easy," he replied, "for me to leave you as you seem to suppose, Amy."

"You mistook me, Edward. You know that, as Fanny's intimate friend, people would think it very strange, if I were to go away now."

"People would think! These are the magic words that govern the fashionable world."

"They do not, you know, govern me, Edward. If you really wish me to go home now, I will go; for, though I should otherwise prefer to remain, that is a trifle; while giving you pain can never be a trifle."

"No, no, Amy; I am not so bad as that. I will stay, and try to be agreeable. Let the world govern whom it may, I am contented to be governed by you."

"But I have no desire to take upon me such an office."

"That is the very reason why I wish you to hold it," replied Edward.

"Come, come," said a brisk-looking lady, who just then joined them; "this is as bad as for married people to be talking together in company; it is not fair. Tell me if you have heard of the affair that took place at Mrs. Longman's party."

"No," was the answer.

"O, I am glad of it. It is a capital story, and I will tell you all about it. Mrs. Longman had a large party of young people, and, in order to entertain her company, made a sort of lottery, in which every one present was offered a ticket—the number of each ticket answering to that of one of the couplets contained in two baskets, one for the ladies, and the other for the gentlemen. When Mr. Sharp's number was called, what do you think he drew? You know he is the very genius of dullness.

'You are too tedious—too prosing—too sleepy;
What lady could fancy Sir Samuel Sheepy?'

Then little Miss Black was called up, a miniature belle, not more than sixteen. (You know she looks like a child.) She had these lines for her portion of the amusement:

'If so soon, little miss, for a husband you sigh,
A gingerbread one I advise you to buy.'



She actually shook her little elbows with vexation. A sort of titter ran through the whole room. Then, you know Mr. Brush, who is a very sensible man, but very particular and quiddling — he received this for his dose :

'Do walk like a man, and leave off that diddle;
The lady you love can't marry a quiddle.'

He supplied the last word himself, saying, 'That means me,' and walked off to a corner of the room. There were many more almost incredible chance-strokes of the same kind ; but, worse than all, when the rich Miss Reed's number was called, she came up, laughing, and these words were heard all through the room :

'Although his words are sweet as honey,
His heart is fixed upon your money.'

Every one knows that she was always a little suspicious, though unjustly, that the gentleman she was engaged to was influenced in his choice by mercenary views. She grew crimson red, and she and her lover forthwith departed, evidently thinking this was a questionable sort of pastime. Many tore their tickets in pieces, and said they did

not wish a prize in such a lottery. One after another left the room, looking as if they had had their noses pulled. Mrs. Longman ordered in the ice creams — flew from one side of the room to the other — fidgeted about, and wondered why people went away so early. She said, ‘It was curious, how things turned out sometimes. She thought that this would be so entertaining.’ Nobody minded her ice creams, or her remarks ; they only seemed anxious to get out of the house. But the worst plight of all, perhaps, was that of the ladies who had written these saucy things, at Mrs. Longman’s request, without an idea of the possibility of such a catastrophe as they witnessed. At first, they stood it pretty well ; but I saw them grow redder and redder ; and they looked, at last, as if the candles burned blue, and they thought they saw evil spirits. Poor Mrs. Longman was sick a-bed the next day. A capital story, is it not ? O, there’s Mr. Henry. He likes a good story ; I must tell it to him.” And away she went, to tell it to the rest of the company.

“ Did you,” said Edward, “ observe Mrs. Manners’ eyes — how they wandered, while

she was telling that story? They were in search of the next person to whom she intended to relate it. She reminded me of a person whom you meet on his way to a steam-boat, or rail-car, whose face says, all the time 'I fear I shall be too late.' She told the story well, and she is very sensible; but what a pity that she loves admiration so much. Did you see her take notice of herself, and adjust her sleeves as she passed the pier glass? but she does not patronize, so I forgive her."

"It is not fair," said Amy, "to stand here criticising others, instead of being agreeable yourself, as you promised you would."

"I am taking the part of listener," said Edward, "which is always acceptable if it is done well."

"A warm evening," said a young lady who was near.

"Quite warm," replied Edward.

"Delightful party, is it not?"

"Oh yes, of course."

"How beautifully the bride looks."

"Yes, she is beautiful."

"Do n't you think brides always look handsome?"

"Certainly."

"Is not her dress superb."

"I suppose so."

"I hear that Mr. Roberts is a delightful man: is he not?"

"Yes, I am much attached to Mr. Roberts."

"I never talk with him, I hear he is so learned. I never talk with philosophers, I am afraid of them. Is Mrs. Roberts blue?"

"What do you call blue?"

"Oh a lady that reads reviews, understands the onomies, the ologies, physics, metaphysics, &c. &c."

Here the lady laughed. Before Mr. Selmar could answer her question she tried another subject.

"Have you been to the centre-table and seen the caricatures?"

"No; I do not like caricatures, unless they are very good."

"Do n't you? I think they are beautiful; perhaps you do not like parties?"

"Not much."

"You do n't say so; I think they are beautiful; there is nothing I admire so much. Oh hush; Miss Treville is going to sing. I am so fond of music, my favorite song too."

After beating time through one bar with her pretty fan, she entered into a loud whispering conversation with a young beau who

stood next to her, which she continued through the remainder of the song."

"Do you know, Mr. Selmar," said the young lady, "that Miss Sidney is going to marry Mr. Wright?"

"No, I did not."

"Why all the world are talking about it," said the young man.

"Are they?"

"Oh yes; and they wonder such a man should marry such a woman, to whom he will always have to play second fiddle."

"What do you suppose, is the reason, Mr. Selmar," said the belle, "that ordinary men so often take a fancy to these very fine women?"

"I suppose," answered Edward, "they have the organ of marvelousness very large, and for this reason are liable to being smitten with what is to them most mysterious, and altogether beyond their comprehension."

"How severe you are this evening," said the belle, laughing.

"But how, in such a case, do you account for the lady's choice?" asked the beau.

"That is a question too deep for my philosophy," replied Edward.

She then resumed her gossip with the beau, in an affected whisper.

"Do you know," said she, "that Miss Belmont the authoress is here?"

"Oh no, I should like to see a live authoress of note. I have never seen a first-rate specimen. Where is she?"

"There she is by Mrs. Lovell, dressed in blue."

"That's right, shows her colors, so that they who have not courage to meet her may have a chance to run away, And live to fight another day."

"It seems to me that she looks quite like other folks."

"Yes; no one would think that she was anything remarkable."

"I dare say she is much overrated," said the belle.

"This is very natural," answered the beau. "It is so unusual for us Americans to have a live curiosity of our own; most of those we have are stuffed, and came from foreign parts."

Both laughed at this jeu d' esprit, and even Edward smiled.

"I mean," said the lady, "to be introduced to her."

"Do you? why what will you say to her?"

"Oh I don't intend to talk with her ; I only want to be able to say that I have been introduced to her."

"She is not half so imposing in her appearance as the lady who is standing near her."

"No she has nothing of the true *haut ton.*"

"Very true : just compare her with Mrs. Lovell, who stands by her. Miss Belmont looks as if she forgot she was in company."

"Do n't you think she is graceful ?" said Mr. Selmar.

"Why yes, rather graceful," replied the belle.

"I think there is great dignity in her simplicity," added Mr. Selmar.

"Now I notice it, she is rather dignified."

"Then she looks so loveable."

"That is true, she has a look as if one might love her. I wonder if she is writing a book ! I mean to ask her."

"Do you think," asked Selmar, "that would be an agreeable question to her ?"

"Oh la ! she must be hardened to all such things by this time. Come, Mr. Bowman, now is a good time for us to be introduced to her ; but we must take care of what we say, or we shall get into her next book."

"Yes," said the gentleman, "whenever you associate with an authoress, your great object must be to keep out of her books." This sapient couple then tripped away, laughing at their own stale jests. Mr. Selmar looked up at Amy with a doleful expression of face, as much as to say, Can this be endured any longer? when Mr. Weston joined them.

"I saw you, father," said Amy, "talking with Miss Belmont, and I thought you looked pleased."

"Yes, I was rather pleased; all the world calls her agreeable. It is a pity that she thinks she knows anything of politics. I cannot bear to hear a woman talk politics."

"Is it not of equal importance to a woman as to a man, what the government is under which she lives? and if so, is it not natural that she should have some opinion?"

"The wisest and best have agreed that women are not equal to deciding upon the great questions relating to government."

"The wisest and best are always men, are they not, father?"

"All the sensible women of my acquaintance," said Mr. Weston, who did not choose to answer Amy's question, "agree with the

great majority of men, in thinking that the female mind is not equal to politics."

Amy was always silent when her father talked about the female mind: she was so heterodox as to believe that mind was of no sex; but she knew she could not change her father's opinion.

"Amy," said Fanny, as she bade her good night, "remember that you have not yet resigned your office of monitor."

"Yes I have," replied Amy, "to Mr. Roberts, as his sole right."

"No! no! I do not consent. I am more used to being good with you; and besides, Mr. Roberts is too indulgent, he lets me be as naughty as I please."

"I trust that he will be a truer friend than that," said Amy, and they parted.

And now all the company one after another took their leave. It seemed as if the lights gradually faded away, and the flowers drooped as each belle with her attendant beau departed.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat;
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ I HAVE been out of tune this evening,” said Edward, as soon as he and Amy were alone together.

“ So I have observed; and I was sorry to see it.”

“ Perhaps you have blamed me for it.”

“ I thought, Edward, it would have been better, if you had been more willing to be pleased, particularly as it was Fanny’s wedding.”

“ You do not sympathize with my state of feeling, Amy.”

“ I think I can understand and excuse your feelings, though I do not sympathize with them.”

“ But I should be better pleased, if you did.”

"What! if you did not feel rightly, Edward?"

"It may be a great fault in me, but I fear I do."

"You do yourself injustice, Edward. We have agreed that we will be faithful friends to each other,—not flatterers."

"True, Amy; but you forget the peculiar trials of my case; to have lost my property just at this moment, when I am sure of your love. But for my misfortunes, we might be married, as well as Fanny and Roberts. O, Amy, I have not felt like a Christian this evening; I have been envious of the happiness of my friend."

"Have faith—have patience; all will yet be well."

"It must be so long before I can possess such a property as will satisfy your father's ambition; perhaps never."

"Should not this uncertainty about the future teach us to make the most of the present?"

"I cannot be so very reasonable as you are, Amy."

"Do not mistake me, Edward; do not think me cold, because, when I am with you, I am too happy to think of the future.

Our love is a present, enduring reality, into which the spirit of fear cannot enter; is it not, Edward?"

" You are right, Amy, and I have been wrong. Yours is the true, the heavenly love—all hoping, all trusting. You shall help me to subdue the spirit of complaint. You have already put a better heart into me."

In man's impatience under suffering, is there not something of that sense of superiority which was the origin of the slavish state in which woman has existed for ages, and to which she is still doomed in many parts of the world? When exposed to the same trials, do we not often see the woman enduring with a quiet patience, a cheerful courage; while lordly man either submits with a cold and haughty calmness, or fiercely resists and complains, as if his chartered rights were infringed. This gives rise to a fault in woman, which deserves still more to be reprobated; it is that of flattering this weakness in man, and, by that means, gaining by art that ascendancy over him, which he finds so much self-complacency in thinking he possesses over her by nature. In both sexes, it is an unrighteous love of dominion. Amy equally detested any approach to the character

of tyrant or slave. She would neither flatter nor be flattered. It was this noble independence of soul that first attracted Edward ; and, although his self-love was sometimes tried by it, yet did he always love and honor her the more for her faithful allegiance to his as well as her own principle of action.

After a silence of some minutes, Edward resumed the conversation.

“I know, Amy, that you will have patience with me ; but there is something almost intolerable in the state in which I am now placed. Every one appears to me to look differently upon me, since I lost my property, except you ; and the only way in which I can win back their regard — the only way in which I can win even you, Amy, is by gaining money. How I hate the very word ! and yet, never before did I so desire the thing.”

“There is another and a far more just view of your case, Edward.”

“What is it, Amy ?”

“Has not your failure discovered to you, as well as to me, that we are bound together by stronger ties than prosperity could have formed ? Do we not suffer together ? Did you not tell my father that you were satisfied ?”

"And I ought to be satisfied. I asked — I wanted nothing of him but his daughter, when I can maintain her. But this odious money, Amy."

"Come ! you must not quarrel so with money, at the same time that you say that with it you can possess my hand. This is not very gallant in you, Edward. I shall expect you to think that money-making is very pleasant work, for my sake. I only wish I could help you, and do something myself; but, on the contrary, here I am doomed to uselessness, because my father is a rich man."

"You are right, Amy ; you are right, and I am all wrong. You shall not see me so weak again. I will learn to love to make bargains ; accounts, price currents, invoices, shall be dear to me ; and all the cheating I see, I will forgive, for your sake."

A few days afterwards, Edward informed Amy that he had made a final settlement with his creditors. His affairs had turned out better than he had feared. He had been able to pay seventy-five cents on a dollar, and had received a full release from all further claims. He then told her that he had resolved to accept a very advantageous proposal, which had been made to him, to go to

China ; that he might be gone two years, perhaps more ; but that he trusted that he should return with such a fortune as would enable them to be married.

Poor Amy ! It was now Edward's turn to teach resignation and hope. He who makes a brave and cheerful sacrifice to duty, always seems to acquire a new power of endurance — a self-supporting energy, that directly transforms him into the comforter of those for whom he devotes himself.

" And it is for me, Edward, that you are leaving your country, your home ; it is for me that you are risking your health, your life."

" It is for myself," replied Edward. " I have no true happiness, till you are my wife. It is for myself ; for I have no home, till you are its guardian angel."

When Edward told Mr. Weston of his determination, he expressed his approbation in more decided terms than it was his habit to do. " It seems," he said, " to promise well. Some of our first men have made their fortunes in this way. Your engagement to my daughter is unfortunate."

Poor Edward writhed under the torture of listening to this and a few more remarks of

the same sort, and, after a short silence, said, “I sail to-morrow, sir. I hope, if my life is spared, that, on my return, I shall find you well and happy, and, if I should be successful, that you will”—he hesitated—“look upon me with more favorable eyes than you do at present.”

He rose to depart. The world had left a little piece of Mr. Weston’s heart unspoiled. He was touched at the thought of the sacrifice Edward was making—at the thought of that *if* which involves the question of life and death; he remembered his late coldness and neglect; for once, he forgot the opinion of the world, and, without consulting the wisest and best, he reached out his hand to Edward, and said, “God bless you!”

There was little conversation between Edward and Amy, the last evening they passed together. O, those sad words—“the last!” With what a leaden weight do the minutes seem to press on our hearts, when their number can be counted before that shall arrive which parts us from one who is dearer to us than life! We cannot—we dare not describe the parting between Amy and Edward. Such scenes are too holy for any but angels to look upon.

Amy's wakeful eye caught the first streak of early dawn, the next morning. If the wind was favorable, the vessel was to sail. We have never understood the full power of the sound of the wind, if we have not heard it at the moment when its invisible wings are bearing the object of an intense love far, far away. It seemed, this morning, as if it breathed on Amy's very soul, as it rose in prayer to God for a blessing on him she loved.

"What way is the wind?" she inquired of Ruth, who entered softly, to make her fire before she rose.

"Due west, ma'am; not a cloud as big as my hand in the whole sky."

Amy sighed heavily.

"Cheer up, Miss Amy; God is where he was. Mr. Edward will be taken good care of, depend upon it — he's acted so honorably."

These simple words from the kind-hearted Ruth seemed to do Amy good. She rose and dressed herself, and made an effort to appear at the morning meal, and pour out her father's coffee with something of her usual cheerfulness. Even Mr. Weston appreciated this little sacrifice to duty; for, after breakfast, he said to her, with great tenderness,

"Edward has a fair wind, my child, and his prospects are very good. I like his spirit."

Little as this may seem, it was a great deal to Amy, and strengthened her in her resolution to seek for consolation, during her separation from Edward, in a more active performance of duty, let that duty be what it might.

While they were at breakfast, Jerry arrived, and inquired for Ruth.

"O dear!" groaned out Jerry, as soon as he saw Ruth.

"What's the matter now, Jerry? and where did you come from?"

"Why, I have just come in from father's farm, and I feel so ugly about Mr. Selmar's going away."

"And so do I," replied Ruth, "and so does other folks; but what's the use of talking of it? It's fetching tow to put out the fire with."

"Well, this I know," said Jerry; "I have been as faithful to him as I knew how."

"Nobody says you have not, Jerry; but self-praise goes but little ways. Do n't you want some breakfast?"

As Ruth said this, she placed a chair at the breakfast table for him. Jerry seated

himself, saying, as he did so, "Why, I do n't know but I do want some breakfast; for I have nothing in my stomach but my sins."

"No wonder you groan so dreadfully," said Ruth. "But what did you want of me, Jerry?"

"Why, you see, Ruth, I have got an idea in my head."

"Have you, Jerry? Better keep it there, and make the most of it, as a sort of nest-egg."

"Come, Ruth, you are too hard upon me, considering I have had no breakfast yet."

After Jerry had done his best to remedy this difficulty, he said to Ruth, "I want to know, Ruth, if you think Miss Amy would really like Robinette?"

"I do n't know, and I do n't want to know anything about it," replied Ruth, very crustily. "I sha' n't meddle nor make with other folks' business again in a hurry, you may depend upon it. He that goes out after wool, comes home shorn;" and Ruth flaunted out of the room, as she said this.

Jerry, however, was not to be so easily discouraged. He was too well pleased with having an idea, to part with it till he had made some use of it. When he had finished his repast, he asked leave to see Mr. Weston.

"What is your business with me?" said Mr. Weston, as Jerry entered.

"Why, you see, sir," said Jerry, turning his hat round and round, and picking off every little scrap of dust he could discover on it, "you see, sir, it's about Robinette. My father, in the country, keeps horses; and when he found I had Robinette to sell, he bought him; and I got him to say, that if I was ever able to lay down the cash for him, he'd let me take him at the same price, with a trifle to boot for keeping."

"Well, Jerry, what of that?"

"Why, sir, when I heard that Mr. Selmar was going away, I thought that, considering how things are, you would, may-be, like to make a trade with me."

"I suppose you mean buy him, Jerry."

"Why, yes, sir, that's my idea; and I can tell you that he's as good a horse as ever snapped; and I kind o' guess Miss Amy would set more by him than any other horse."

Mr. Weston's heart was somewhat tender at the moment, and he resolved to purchase the horse for Amy. He agreed to pay Jerry his price, and desired him to bring Robinette on the 1st of January, which was at hand, but desired Jerry to say nothing about it.

Jerry went out exulting, and snapping his fingers at Ruth with great glee.

"What has happened?" asked Ruth.
"Has Mr. Weston taken the horse?"

"You remember," said Jerry, "that this is none of your business. I can keep a secret as well as you, Ruth."

"Your being so tickled does not argue that Miss Amy is going to have Robinette," replied Ruth. "A little pot is soon hot. I would not give much for your secret."

Jerry ran off. It was his only chance for safety from Ruth's tongue.

CHAPTER VII.

“ The heart that feels for others’ woes
Shall feel each selfish sorrow less ;
His breast who happiness bestows
Reflected happiness shall bless.”

ARMINE AND ELVIRA.

THE resolution which Amy had formed the morning her lover sailed, to seek for consolation during his absence in a more active performance of duty, did not pass away with that intense feeling of loss, that sense of utter desolation, which pressed upon her heart at the time she made it, and which happily for us cannot be an enduring state of mind.

Fidelity to duty was no new thing to her ; but Amy had made progress in her notions of what duty was. To attend faithfully and with a cheerful spirit to her father’s household, to be his companion and friend, as far as the great dissimilarity of their characters allowed, to promote the interest and welfare as far as she could of every individual of the

house, all this was so natural and easy, that it no longer required an effort ; neither did she neglect her duties to herself, to her own mind ; but Edward's example had kindled in her heart a higher ambition than she had ever before felt. There was stirring in Amy's soul, that feeling of discontent, which is even the first motion towards the attainment of a higher degree of excellence than we have yet reached. She had hitherto been in the habit of giving a portion of the money she had at her own disposal, to those who had the care of the poor, to be employed by them for their benefit. She now resolved to be her own almoner, and to exercise that higher charity which bids us give our time, our thoughts, our active sympathy to the poor. Amy soon found that this kept in exercise all the best faculties of her mind, and called upon her for continual sacrifices. She was obliged to practise the strictest economy both of time and money, in order not to neglect any of her duties at home, and to have enough to give to the needy. In order to be a good adviser to the poor, she was obliged to think of all their circumstances and relative duties and rights. Religion became to her mind a more deep, and intense, and affecting

reality than it had ever before been, when she was called upon to give consolation to those who, in the depths of human misery, and bereft of all outward comforts, had lost their faith, and cried out in the agony of their souls “Where now is my hope?” All this called upon Amy for constant and strenuous effort: she was often wearied, but never disengaged; disappointed, but not disheartened. She made mistakes, but she was patient with herself as she was with others, and even from her errors extracted useful lessons; and she never allowed any difficulty or failure to disturb her faith or her good humor.

Mr. Weston had noticed that Amy was less interested than she had ever before been in parties and amusements; but he attributed it to Edward’s absence. She soon had an opportunity of ascertaining how little sympathy or aid she might expect from him in her present pursuits.

“Father,” she said one morning at breakfast, “I want your assistance in a little plan that I have much at heart.”

“What is it, my daughter?”

“I know of a number of poor women, who cannot go out to labor for the support of their families, because they cannot leave their

children ; now I want to find a competent person, who will take the charge of these little children for a few hours of every day, instruct them and make them happy. In order that the teacher of this infant school should be well paid, my funds must be considerably enlarged ; and if you think it proper, I would like to have some aid from you, father."

"I have great doubts about such institutions, Amy."

"What are your objections, father ?"

"In the first place, I much doubt the expediency of teaching the poor ; it makes them discontented."

"But, father, most of them are babies, what they learn cannot harm them, if knowledge were ever so dangerous ; the principal object is to enable their mothers to work for their support. You know not, dear father, what the poor suffer ; I have been among them, and I know what they endure."

"Let me tell you, Amy, that I do not approve of your going among the poor ; you are in danger of taking some disease ; it is not a proper employment for a young lady in your station of life, and with your prospects. This duty, if it be one, should be left to those who are nearer their own level."

"I should be sorry, father, to leave to the poor all the luxury of doing good. If you had been with me, sometimes when I have had the happiness to lessen some of their sorrows, you would not wonder that I take the pleasure I do in visiting them. Oh, father, I have witnessed such gentle patience under acute pain, such calm faith, such holy trust under the severest trials —"

"I always avoid such scenes," replied her father; "Providence has taken care of me and mine, and I am grateful. As I could not therefore be a good counsellor to those who suffer, and as my nerves are too weak to bear the sight of misery, I keep out of the way of such things."

"But, would it not be well, father, to save these little children from suffering, if we could?"

"Where are the fathers of these children? Why do not their fathers support them?"

"Some of them are dead, some are worse than dead — vicious; others are absent, and others are incapacitated for labor by disease."

"You are meddling, Amy, with things out of the sphere of a young lady's walk of life; the wisest and best have agreed that the poor ought not to marry. All the cases you have

stated are the necessary results of the present vicious state of things : it is only interfering with the wise designs of Providence, to attempt to prevent the natural consequences and legitimate punishment of what should never have existed. Poverty, my daughter, would die out of itself, but for the mistaken efforts of benevolent enthusiasts. I make it a matter of conscience to do nothing towards perpetuating vice and misery ; the public good requires it, I owe this to the station I hold in society."

Amy still continued her hopeless appeal to her father's heart.

" Did not Jesus, father, preach particularly to the poor ? Were not his instructions particularly calculated to elevate the poor ? "

" So far from it, my daughter, that his instructions were, I think, intended to make them quiet and submissive under all the trials of life. Jesus was careful never to meddle with any of the existing relations of society, even that most abject poverty where a man does not possess his own body — even slavery. Wise and pious men think it sanctioned by the conduct and teachings of Jesus Christ."

Mr. Weston had fairly talked himself into

a conviction that he was the true, and Amy the mistaken philanthropist ; and he actually felt an increase of self-satisfaction from the conversation. Amy shuddered at the cold-hearted sophistry of her father's arguments, and this utter perversion of the religion of Jesus. She tried to persuade herself he had blindly adopted these heartless views upon the authority of others. She would have attempted to vindicate Providence, and the friend and Saviour of man from the false charge of approving of evils which are caused by the imperfect institutions and selfish passions of men ; but her father's manner convinced her that he was inaccessible to any arguments that were not sanctioned by the opinion of the world. "I know," thought Amy, "to whom I can go, and who will gladly help me with their money and their sympathy." With these thoughts in her mind Amy endeavored on her way to her cousin's house to chase away the painful impressions which her conversation with her father had occasioned. She found Fanny at home, and alone, and rejoiced to see her.

"Roberts," said Fanny, "has gone to take a long walk into the country with a friend, and I told him that I should be revenged

upon him for leaving me at home, and alone, all this morning, by being very happy without him ; and you have come just in right time to help me keep my vow."

"I am sorry he is not at home," said Amy, "for I wanted that he as well as you should engage with me in a little project I have at heart."

As soon as Amy had told Fanny her plans, and before she had given half her reasons in favor of them, Fanny's purse was in her hand and open.

"Tell me what to give, my dear ; you know I have no other use for money than spending it. Take what you want, and do what you will with it ; I only stipulate for one regulation in your school."

"What is that, Fanny ?"

"That the first efforts for the improvement of the children should be devoted exclusively to the outside. Please my dear, to lay out my money for tubs, and brushes, and soap, and sponges ; let the little brats be all but drowned and flayed alive the first day they enter the school ; and, as you value my friendship, do not put either of your nice little hands upon one of the little dirty horrors till this operation is duly performed. I should

like to endow a washing establishment for all the dirty babies in the country."

Amy promised that this should be properly attended to. "But Fanny," she said, "you must go with me and see my school when it is established."

"Certainly," replied Fanny; "I presume that your prime minister, Ruth, will keep proper dresses for visitors as they do at Niagara for those who go behind the falls?"

"I was not aware that any peculiar dress was necessary," said Amy laughing.

"Oh yes," replied Fanny; "One ought to wear a drab colored English merino pelisse or gown, an old Leghorn bonnet with an ash colored ribbon on it, and a green old barege veil, dark cotton stockings, with large India rubber shoes, loose cotton gloves with the ends of the fingers hanging over, a shiny looking black silk bag with a steel clasp, and chain swinging on your arm; and on rainy days a blue cotton umbrella, or, as Ruth calls it, an amberill: this dress is essential for a visit to a charity school."

"Come, come, Fanny! more harm is done to a good cause by ridicule than by positive abuse; you shall not laugh at my school."

"But, Amy, I mean to share the ridicule with you; I know that we shall be laughed at, but I mean to have my share of the sport. Let me see your list of subscribers. It seems to me, Amy, that you have not got the names of the wisest and best; more sinners than saints on your list. Where shall I put down my name, among the goats, or the sheep, or, as Mr. Skinner says, promiscuously as it were?"

"Oh Fanny, you are as full of mischief as ever; I did hope being married would improve you."

"That is an obsolete notion, Amy. The march of mind has discovered that matrimony is to character what the alum or some other chemical preparation which the dyers use to set their colors, is to cloth. This is the philosophical meaning of the yankee phrase, 'being fixed down, or settled in life.' "

Amy observed that while Fanny was rattling on she was preparing to put down her name among her subscribers. She took hold of her hand gently as she said, "Keep the paper, dear, and show it to your husband. I would rather you would consult him first; he may not approve, you know.

Fanny colored slightly, and answered,—
“He always lets me do as I please about such things; why should I show it to him?”

“But would he not therefore be the more pleased to have you consult him? I should be glad to know his opinion, and have his counsel. Keep the paper, dear, and send it to me when you have done with it.”

There was a short silence; then a little more chat, and the cousins parted. Mr. Roberts returned from his walk with that indescribable glow of health and spirits which nothing but exercise in the open air can give. It was just the dinner hour; but Fanny had been looking for him for some minutes.

“Well, my dear Fanny,” he said, “have you kept your word, and been very happy all this morning?”

“Yes,” she replied, “I have been unusually happy; my friend Amy has been with me; I always enjoy her society.” As she said this, she rang the bell and ordered the dinner to be brought in. There was an emphasis on the words “unusually,” and “always,” which grated a little on her husband’s feelings; but he made an effort to forget it, and said, with rather a forced laugh,—“I trust you will not carry your revenge so far as to be sorry I have returned.”

"Wives," said Fanny, "must always be glad to see their lords and masters, come when they may."

Mr. Roberts made no reply; the tone of his spirits fell even below their usual level. He was silent and dull during dinner, and immediately after, took the newspaper. Fanny's heart was troubled; she was conscious that she had given her husband pain; but she tried to persuade herself that he was too sensitive, instead of frankly confessing that she had done wrong. Roberts was too proud to say he was hurt at her manner. Presently Fanny remembered the subscription paper for Amy's school.

"If," said she, "you could lay aside your paper one moment, I have something I want to speak of with you. There is a little charitable project of Amy's, which I should be glad to assist her in, if you approve of it."

Fanny meant to say just the right thing; but there was an overstrained respect in her tone, a precision of manner that her husband felt was disagreeable, and her effort failed to restore him to a cheerful state of mind.

"I will attend to it," he replied, "as soon as I have finished reading these debates in congress."

Fanny now thought that she was the aggrieved party, and, drawing a long sigh, she took up a book, and was soon apparently absorbed in its contents. Mr. Roberts finished what he was reading, and, looking up, saw his young, beautiful and lovely wife with an expression of sadness in her face. He thought he was foolish to have noticed such a trifle, and that after all it was only Fanny's way ; then he thought of his want of courtesy in not attending to what she had to say to him, and at last he came to the conclusion that after all he alone was to blame. He seated himself by the side of Fanny in the sofa, and said to her in the most affectionate tone, " I fear, my dear wife, that I was not very civil to you ; I am sorry if I gave you pain ; but you hurt me a little by your tone and manner of speaking to me when I returned from my walk."

" What did I say ? " replied Fanny, " I am unconscious of having done any wrong. "

" It was but a trifle," replied her husband, and he repeated what she said, and tried to imitate her tone.

Fanny denied it. " My heart," she said, " would have forbidden my speaking in such a way to you." Her husband was not con-

vinced, but he could not bear any further contention.

"Perhaps I was mistaken," he said ; "let it pass. What did you want to speak of with me ? "

Fanny brought the paper, and told him of Amy's school ; but her husband's mind was otherwise occupied.

"Do just as you please, my dear ; I dare say if Amy and you approve of it, it is a good thing."

Fanny put down her name for what sum she thought proper, and this trifle as they thought it, was apparently forgotten. In the course of the evening Fanny sent the paper to Amy, and wrote on the envelope, "Mr. Roberts entirely approves of your school. I enclose you my subscription."

Amy was much pleased at the liberal aid and cordial approbation of her friends in her favorite plan. She found many others willing to assist her with their money, or in any other way that she should point out. She discovered that there were not many people who held her father's opinions upon the subject of the education of the poor : here and there she met with a loyal conservative of the barbarous times which he represented, stand-

ing like a blighted tree among the green foliage and full blossoming branches of a more genial, a more hopeful age.

As Fanny had supposed, Ruth was a great help to Amy in all her labors of charity. If anything was to be sent to the sick or the sorrowful, Ruth was always at leisure to take it : if Amy expressed the apprehension lest she were too much fatigued with her duties at home to visit the poor, she would answer, "Kindness will creep, ma'am, where it cannot run ; what good I can do will never hurt me."

Soon after Amy's school was established, she went to pass the evening at her cousin's. When Mr. Roberts came in, she said to him, "I have been wanting to tell you how much pleased I am that you approve of my school, and to thank you for your very liberal aid."

Mr. Roberts had only a slight, and that not a very agreeable recollection, of what Fanny had said to him, about the school, and did not know what she had given.

"I was not aware," he said, "of deserving your thanks ; what school do you mean ? I doubt not, Amy, I shall think well of it, if it is your work."

"I thought, Fanny, that you wrote me

word that your husband approved of my school."

"I did so," replied Fanny, "and he certainly said that he did; but we must not expect men who are so entirely occupied with rail-roads, and silk-worms, coal-mines, and sugar-beets, Swedish turnips and steam-boats, to think of such common things as dirty crying children. You know that he is now engaged in public improvements, which, if you have observed, have no reference to the individual good of human beings. On they go, these public improvers like their own steam-engines, running over blind men and pigs, deaf old women and cows, children and geese; and the best you can hope for is, that, out of common mercy, they will invent a contrivance by which they can catch up whoever is in their way, and carry him off, nolens volens, nobody knows where. If your school could be benefited by a rail-road to Chargoggagoggmanchoggagogg Pond, I advise you, my dear, to come to Mr. Roberts for assistance."

Fanny paused here, because she was out of breath; she observed that her husband did not much relish what she intended for sport, but she enjoyed it herself too well to stop

even for his sake. She continued,— “ I heard, the other day, of one poor fellow who ventured on the top of a rail-road car which went at such a rate that when he stopped, and happened to look in the glass, he discovered that he had lost his wig, nose, and teeth on the road.”

“ What nonsense, Fanny ! come be serious, I want to tell Mr. Roberts how well my school succeeds. It is your fault, I doubt not, that he knows nothing of it.”

“ When did you ever speak of it ? ” asked her husband.

“ The day,” replied Fanny, “ when you and Mr. Elton walked out to Brookline and returned so late to dinner.”

“ I remember it all now ; ” said Mr. Roberts, “ I believe, however, I was in season for dinner.” A slight shade came over his face as he spoke.

“ I don’t think I looked at the paper at all, or knew what Fanny subscribed. I felt sure that if it was a plan of yours, Amy, I should like it, and that whatever money Fanny gave for that object would be well spent.”

There was an emphasis upon the last part of this remark ; for Mr. Roberts had lately

thought his wife foolishly and wastefully extravagant in her expenses, and he had once intended to say so; but his remembrance of the pain he felt, at the little misunderstanding we have before mentioned, made him unwilling to speak, lest Fanny should be displeased. Unconsciously, the smothered disapprobation he had felt towards his wife had affected the whole tone of his remarks, and gave them the appearance of a decided censure. Fanny felt it deeply, and was much irritated.

"I well know," she said, "that Amy is a far better judge of every thing than I am. Suppose, my dear, we let her plan all our proceedings; and suppose that, in order that all your money should be well spent, you keep the purse altogether to yourself; and I will come to you, when I want a paper of pins, and say, Please, Mr. Roberts, give me a quarter of a dollar, to buy me some pins."

All this was said with a forced laugh; but any one, who understood Fanny's face, might see that it was only a strong effort of pride, that kept her from bursting into tears. Mr. Roberts felt he had been unjust and unkind to his wife; he saw how deeply he had hurt her; he knew, that if he thought her extrav-

agent in her expenses, he ought to have told her of it at another time, and in another way. He was angry with himself; he wanted to say this to her, but how could he before another person?

Poor Amy knew not what to say. She felt that she was in the way; but what could she do? Presently she said, "Fanny, dear, you promised to visit my school. If Mr. Roberts be at leisure, I shall expect you both to-morrow."

By this time, they had recovered their self-possession, and Mr. Roberts said he would gladly come.

The remainder of the evening passed off heavily, in spite of some unsuccessful efforts which Mr. Roberts made to entertain Amy. There was wanting that most essential charm in an intercourse between friends — frank-hearted truth, and a fearless expression of it.

As soon as they were alone, Mr. Roberts said to Fanny, "My dear wife, how could I give you so much pain? I know not what possessed me. I did not think of the construction that might be put upon what I said."

Fanny could only answer by her tears. At last, when she was able to speak, she said, "What could induce you, William, to

speak as you did? If you have thought me extravagant about money, why not tell me so?"

Mr. Roberts had not the courage to be true to himself and to his wife, and tell her all he had thought and felt. He answered in a hurried and evasive manner.

"I don't know what made me so irritable, my dear Fanny. Spend money as you please, only forgive and love me. I cannot forgive myself for having caused you so much pain, you must think me so very unkind."

"Let it all be forgotten," said Fanny. "I knew that you could not be really unkind. I was wrong for feeling so much about it."

They both agreed that they would avoid such painful subjects for the future.

Amy was rejoiced, when her friends came to fulfil their engagement the next morning, to see that harmony was restored between them. They seemed, she thought, even more than usually attentive and affectionate in their manner towards each other. When Amy was exhibiting her school to Mr. Roberts, she called his attention to her nice wash room for the children. There were tubs, and basins, and all proper washing apparatus, nicely arranged; and the appearance of the

children testified to their proper application. Mr. Roberts expressed his particular approbation of this part of the establishment.

"Come here, Fanny," he said to his wife ; "come and praise Amy for her faithful attention to this most essential means of elevating and improving the poor. See what a complete washing apparatus she has for them."

"This is your wife's doings," said Amy. "She stipulated that the money she gave should be used for this purpose. It is her good judgment you must praise."

Roberts looked pleased, and Fanny was touched by Amy's thoughtful kindness. They saw the children go through all their various exercises ; then the babies put to bed, to take their morning nap, and the larger children let out into the play-ground, and heard their merry voices at play.

"Every morning," said Amy, "the teacher gives them a short lesson in religion and morals, by means of familiar anecdotes and simple stories. Our great object is to teach the children to speak their own thoughts, and lay open their own minds, in order that, knowing their peculiarities and wants, the right instruction may be given them. We never allow any spectators at that time ; for

we consider their religious sentiments and their childish confidence as sacred, and that it would be a breach of faith to exhibit them; to say nothing of the danger of making them hypocrites or egotists."

"The only objection I have to make to your school, Amy," said Fanny, as they were walking home, "is, that the schoolmistress has in her hand no birch rod, held up perpendicularly before her face, as a wholesome terror to the little evil-doers. How came you not to bring them up in the good old way in which the wisest and best were educated? Besides, you have not taught them to make their manners to you every time you speak to them, as aunt Hetty used to tell me I ought to. You are a radical, after all."

CHAPTER VIII.

“And forward though I canna see,
I guess an’ fear.”

BURNS.

THUS did Amy pass the first year of her lover's absence, exacting from the hours, as they passed, a tribute of happy recollections. She performed all her duties to her father with such cheerful exactness, that he could find no fault with her. She did not neglect any of the just claims of society. She read, she studied, she thought, more than she ever had before. All her faculties seemed to be ripening under the influence of the pure and elevated love which had awakened her soul to its highest freedom. In her visits to the poor, while entering into their trials and feelings, she acquired a deeper and juster knowledge of human nature, and therefore a truer reverence for it. To Fanny, she was as she ever had been — a faithful friend — always speaking the truth in love to her — ever guarding her against those faults which she

feared, if indulged in, would eventually prove fatal to her peace.

There was another source of anxiety in Amy's heart, with regard to Fanny and her husband. She feared they wanted the habit, founded on principle, of an entire and unre-served expression of all their feelings, whatever they might be, to each other ; they had not a determined purpose, that their thoughts, their every action and desire, their most trifling joys and sorrows — their whole souls, should stand all undisguised before the other, in the simplicity of truth. Amy also apprehended that they neither of them possessed that faith in the reality of their spiritual nature, which can alone secure the happiness of married life from that slow and gradual but certain decay, brought on by the little collisions, the every day trials of temper, the personal dislikes, which sometimes spring up when the charm which belongs to a less intimate and more imaginative connexion is dissolved. Without an implicit reliance on that spiritual foundation of all true love, how could they possess an abiding faith in the immortality of their union, dependent only on their remaining worthy of each other's affection by a continual growth in excellence ?

When Fanny became a mother, Amy said to her one day, as she was caressing her infant, "What a new and precious bond of union this dear baby must be, Fanny, between you and your husband! Here your hearts will always meet, I am sure; and it will make you both love Him who gave it, better and more truly than ever."

"I pray that you may not be disappointed in your faith in us, Amy," replied Fanny; and the tears flowed fast down her cheeks, as she spoke.

Amy's heart was troubled.

After rather a long and oppressive silence, Fanny resumed the conversation.

"Do you know, Amy, that we shall soon leave Boston?" and her tears began again to flow.

"Dear Fanny, no! I thought you loved Boston too well to think it possible that you should live elsewhere."

"And so I do, Amy," answered Fanny, with vehemence. "I love the very clumsy old broken paving-stones of Boston better than all the splendors of any other city in the world. I love its crooked lanes—its ugly churches—its narrow sidewalks. I love all the stiff, prudish people of Boston—

their odd, narrow, aristocratic notions — their solemn self-conceit. All its follies are dear to me."

" You have given a queer set of reasons for loving Boston, Fanny."

" This is the best proof that I am a true lover. Any person of common sense and good taste must love Boston for what all acknowledge to be excellent in it. But as for its intellectual and moral tastes, and all its nameless attractions — there is no merit in loving these. But I love it for its very faults, especially now that I am going to leave it. This puts me in mind of poor aunt Hetty, who was very tiresome to me while she was alive, trotting about, finding fault with every thing and every body, especially with me, whom she probably thought the chief of sinners. Then I saw all her defects, personal and mental ; but when the dear old soul came to die, when she so meekly resigned herself to the will of God, and so humbly confessed all her sins (which, after all, were so few) — when she even put her hand on my head, and prayed so fervently for a blessing upon me, which, I am sure, I did not deserve, and when I heard her calm and Christian farewell, and knew that

it was her last — O, then how my heart prayed that she might live, and that I might be blessed, for many years, with her faithful love — her kind, because just reproofs ! Even her homely face became beautiful to me ; the great wart on the tip of her nose lost its deformity ; and I have, ever since, felt rather a peculiar regard for such excrescences upon that respectable, yet so often comical and much-abused, feature of the human face.”

Fanny burst into a sort of hysterical laugh, at her own strange fancies.

“ Why,” said Amy, who could not resist joining in Fanny’s tearful laugh, “ Why do you leave Boston, if you feel so badly about it ? and where are you going ? ”

“ My husband’s father,” replied Fanny, “ has lately had a stroke of the palsy. He is very infirm, and has sent on an urgent request to his son, that he would come and live with him for the remainder of his days. He is rich, lives in a house sufficiently large to accommodate us all, and there we are going as soon as we can make the necessary arrangements. Now tell me if you don’t pity me, Amy.”

“ I cannot think any one is a fit subject for compassion,” said Amy, “ who can call

such a sweet baby as you have in your lap her own; to say nothing of all your other blessings, Fanny."

"Yes, I know all that can be said of that sort of thing, Amy. Mrs. Lovell has been here, talking good to me, and giving me a vast deal of information with regard to the extraordinary character of my husband, and telling me that I was the most favored woman in the world — that it was my own fault, if I was not perfectly happy; in short, she made out a list of my blessings, sufficiently accurate for an auctioneer, if, alas! happiness could be purchased. You see, Amy, I know all about my blessings beforehand."

"My dear Fanny, I must, nevertheless," replied Amy, "ask you to look in that sweet baby's face, that is now actually smiling upon you, and see if you do not find the spirit of complaint die away, and a brighter, happier feeling take its place. A heart so loving as yours must make its own home. What matter is it where you are, if those you love are with you?"

"But, Amy, I must part from you. How can I live without you?"

"You are less dependent upon me, Fanny,

than you suppose. Besides, I do not intend that you shall live without me. We will be good and faithful correspondents, and our love shall still be a mutual blessing to us. Come, Fanny, cheer up; by to-morrow you will begin to see the bright side of the picture. I shall, after all, be the greatest loser. You have a husband and child; but whom have I here to take your place?"

For the short time that they remained in Boston, Fanny persisted in speaking of their removal to New York as if it were a banishment from all that was desirable in life. The evening before their departure they passed with Amy.

"Remember us in your prayers, Amy," said Fanny, as she bade her farewell. "We not only (at least, I may speak for myself) partake largely of the weakness and sins of our first parents, but we are also receiving a similar punishment. I, the Eve of the play, am, of course, the greatest sinner. Come, spouse adored," she said to her husband, "I suppose that you, like father Adam, are punished more for the sins of your wife than for your own."

Amy, who had been intimate with Fanny from a child, knew that this levity was as-

sumed, in order to hide feelings which she did not dare to indulge ; but she saw that Mr. Roberts was deeply pained by it ; and in the shade of sadness on his brow, which was not for a moment chased away by Fanny's forced merriment, she discerned a dark foreboding of future sorrow and trial to them both.

About a week after Fanny's arrival, Amy received the following letter from her :

New York, ——.

Dear Amy,

Can it be only a week since I left Boston — the blessed place where I first drew the breath of life, where I first became conscious of this craving thirst for happiness, still unsatisfied, the place where you and I have been playmates and friends as long as I can remember anything, the place where I first learned to love all that I have loved, all that I do love ? Do you wonder, when all these recollections of Boston cluster around my heart, that I should feel so sad at leaving it ? "No," you will say ; "but it is your duty to try to like New York ; that is—that must be your home." What a task you have set me ! I cannot like anything be-

cause it is my duty to like it. But I will give you some of my first impressions, and then you will see that I have duty enough on hand. I pass over the impression made on my mind, at our arrival in the city, by the forests of masts—the multitudinous houses—the unceasing movement of human beings, rushing, in perpetual streams, through the streets and lanes of the city, like the blood through the veins and arteries of the human body. My husband asked me, as the steamboat stopped at the wharf, if it was not a grand sight. "Yes," I said; "but it makes me feel very lonely, to see so many strangers." "It shall," he replied, "be the purpose of my life, dear Fanny, to make you happy. I hope you will become reconciled to New York." "O, yes," I answered, "I shall be happy;" and I really felt, at that moment, Amy, as if I could have lived with him in the black hole of Calcutta.

But you want to know about my home, and about my husband's father, whom I never saw before. He is a kind, simple-hearted, quiet old man. As he folded his arms around his son, he said, "Thank Heaven, who has given me back my son! You will be here, William, to close your old

father's eyes." He received me very affectionately, and said, "You must remember, my dear, that you are in your father's house." I felt quite happy, considering I was not in Boston. The tears came into the old man's eyes, when my husband presented him our baby. "God bless the boy," he said, "and make him as great a comfort to his parents as my son has been to me!" Presently he rang the bell. When the servant came, he desired him to go and tell Mrs. Hawkins that Mr. and Mrs. Roberts had arrived. "Your housekeeper, father, is it not?" said my husband. "Yes," he replied; "and a very useful and faithful person she is. I could not live without her."

In a few minutes, this important personage entered. She is a short, spare figure, with a head long and large enough for a tall woman. She has a long, hooked nose, and scarcely any chin, with a large mouth; but her lips are so thin, and they are so firmly compressed, that, when she is silent, you would hardly know she had any. Her piercing, black eyes are perfectly round. Her complexion is very yellow, and she dresses in green; so that the idea of a bilious parrot was immediately brought to my mind by her appearance; and I should not have been

much surprised, if I had said “poor Poll” to her. Then she takes very short steps, and moves very fast; so of course she must trot; and as her petticoats are short, and her feet unusually long, when your attention is not arrested by her nose, you see nothing but her feet.

Imagine, dear Amy, what I must have endured, at being introduced to such a figure, with the knowledge, too, that I was to live with her, nobody knows how long. But I will go on with scene first in our new life. When she heard our names, she darted a glance at us, and, quick as thought, she ran up to my husband first, and gave his hand a sort of swing, and afterwards performed the same operation upon me, but with less cordiality. I see you shake your head, Amy, and say, “Fanny, this is naughty in you; it is contemptible, to laugh at personal defects or peculiarities,” and so on; and I acknowledge it all. But, remember, I have promised to write every thing to you just as it is—to say every thing just as it comes into my mind; and you could not judge of me rightly without knowing every thing relating to me, more especially anything so important, and so calculated to affect one’s destiny, as being

doomed to live with such an oddity as I have described.

Well, to continue. She took the baby with a sort of jerk from the nurse's arms, and held it up to the light, which of course set it screeching. As she jerked it back again, she said, "It looks most like its Ma."

After we had been seated a little while, she asked me if I should like to go to my room to refresh myself. I gladly said yes. She treads very heavy, and wears double soled shoes; so you may imagine what a clatter she makes going up stairs.

It is a large old-fashioned house, and our apartments are delightful. My nursery is next to my own chamber, and all is thoughtfully arranged for our comfort. Mrs. Hawkins said, "she hoped things would suit; she had done the best she could for us." And she retired. When the dinner hour had nearly arrived, I went down stairs into the drawing-room, where I found my husband and his father still chatting as I left them. Presently the old gentleman said, "I have always been in the habit of having my house-keeper at my table. If it be not disagreeable I shall still invite her to our meals."

"Certainly," replied my husband. "You have no objection, I am sure, Fanny?"

What could I do but tell a fib, and say I had none? So you perceive I am doomed to take my meals with this strange biped. How I shall bear it I cannot say. No one in this world I am sure would stand surety for my good behavior. Three times a day, for an hour at a time I must see her. I know nothing of her character, for she merely throws out her words as the automaton chess player says "echec." If she would only turn out a piece of machinery now, how relieved I should be; but I fear she has some kind of a soul, though I have not found out yet what is its character.

And now I dare say you would ask; "Are you happy Fanny? and do you behave yourself well?" All the world would suppose that there was but one answer to both questions. Yes, to the first, and no, to the last. But it often happens that the world answers questions for us that we should find it hard to answer for ourselves. Am I happy? I ought to be; I do thirst for happiness; what human being does not? I cannot tell why I am not. No woman was ever blessed with a better husband; my precious baby looks like an emanation of joy. All the world without, smiles upon me. Where are the clouds,

whence are they, that hang round my heart sometimes? I know not. When my husband sees them he does every thing that patient kindness can do to chase them away; but then I try his temper sadly; I know I do, though he never finds fault with me now. He is even more silent than he used to be, or he takes a book, or he goes to walk. If he would only speak; if he would only scold at me, as you do; if he would but just get into a passion, ever so little of a passion, I should feel better than to see him so quiet when I know I have done wrong, and that he is not pleased. You see that I am a little hipped, dear Amy, or I should not run on so, as if there was anything real in it. Burn this. It is all nonsense. It is the strange housekeeper that makes me so vaporish, I doubt not. My husband always sends his love to you; and as for my baby if it does not love you I will disown it.

Ever yours,

FANNY ROBERTS.

Amy sighed heavily as she finished reading Fanny's letter. "Alas, poor Fanny!" said she to herself, "there is a canker at the root of all her joys."

' And forward though I cannot look,
I guess and fear.'

I must be faithful to her now. I must tell her all I think. I must warn her against the dangers that beset her."

With Amy, to resolve and to act, were the same thing. She immediately wrote the following letter to her friend.

Dearest Fanny,

You are a really good correspondent ; you tell everything just as it occurs, as you promised. I could not but laugh heartily at your description of Mrs. Hawkins ; and yet Fanny, I cannot think such things quite right. You have injured that woman, I doubt not. I cannot believe that she is such a strange mortal as you have described her. But, dear Fanny, though I began your letter with laughing, I ended with the heart-ache, for I saw in it that you were not happy ; and, at the risk of giving you pain, I must speak frankly and fearlessly to you, all that is in my heart. I must tell you all the apprehensions which your letter has called up in my mind with regard to the happiness of your future life.

You are unhappy. You must not attempt

to hide it from me ; you cannot ; you *are* unhappy. Now, what is the cause of it ? You have not taken that fatal step, you have not brought upon yourself that life-long blight, of marrying a man that you do not love ; you have not so desecrated your own soul. No, dear Fanny, you love Mr. Roberts better than aught else in this wide world, and yet you are not happy as his wife. What is the reason ? You must put this question to your own heart with the most solemn earnestness. Have you not supposed that a union with him you loved was to make you happy in itself, and by itself ; and that it involved no appropriate duties, and called for no unusual virtue ? There are no external causes of your unhappiness. You have all that the most craving heart can reasonably ask of outward good. The children of poverty, and sickness, and oppression, might well cry out against you, that with so many of God's richest blessings on your head, your every breath is not a song of praise and thankfulness. Whence, then, as you yourself ask, are these clouds that hang over your heart ?

Is it not, Fanny, that, instead of going with your craving thirst for happiness, to the Eter-

nal Fountain, you are still standing unsatisfied by the broken cisterns that hold no water? You allow your thoughts and affections to dwell on the outward; you do not cultivate the principle of faith.

"Very like," you will say; "I know this well, but how am I to do this? Show me the way." They who strive after the highest must begin with the nearest. Go to your husband, and ask his help, and seek to aid him in the same great purpose of a perfect understanding between you. You must tell him all that is in your heart; you must turn it inside out to him. You must be perfectly true yourself, and you must insist upon truth from him in return. You must confess to your husband every weakness and sin of your own, as well as tell him every fault you find in him, and every pain that he gives you. You must pour out into his bosom every hope, every fear, every trembling doubt, every mysterious longing that you can find words, or sighs, or tears to communicate; just as you would to God himself. Do not answer, "My husband is so reserved that I cannot speak to him on these subjects; he never speaks to me upon them." Speak to him

then of the pain that he gives to you by his reserve.

What is it you love in him? It is his soul; O, can you bear to be a stranger to that? and can you be happy when he is a stranger to yours? No! your heart answers, No! This is the secret of your discontent, dear Fanny. Do not heed the little cares, the little vexations, the little faults, that every day brings with it. The little and the great troubles of life are excellent exercises of our faith and patience, if we will only so view them; and the mutual errors and failings of friends, if instead of trying to hide, there is a determined purpose to cure them, will bind them more closely together. If our hearts are perfectly united in one holy desire beyond and above all those paltry trials and vexations, then the real and the unreal things of life become distinctly understood, and take their right place in our affections, and have only their just influence upon our happiness. But if, on the contrary, the thoughts and affections dwell in the transient circumstances of life, then all the imperfections, within and without, acquire a power if it were only from their number, that becomes at last irresistible, and when the soul awakes it finds itself a

prisoner. I have for some time, dear Fanny, feared that these enemies to your peace were gaining a dangerous power over your happiness, and that thus, instead of finding in your husband as you might, a helper to your virtue, a true friend of your soul, you will make him another cause of evil, and eventually of almost hopeless misery to you.

Dearest Fanny, I well know I give you pain. I know that to a common and uninterested observer all that I have said would seem superfluous and not warranted by the occasion ; but I think I can read your soul better than any one else, and I know that it is only faithful love that bids me speak as I do. For some time past I have perceived, as I thought, that your happiness wanted the foundation which only perfect truth and religious trust can give. Love between married people must be like St. Paul's description of charity, bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring all things, it must never fail ; like charity too, it must be built on faith and hope, and thus become the greatest of the three, because it is the full expression and perfect manifestation of all.

I fear you will say, " Oh what a sermon ;

she promised me a letter!" But I know you will forgive me, even if you think I am tiresome and disagreeable, and that you will continue to love me; so I will set you a good example, and be not faithless but believing.

Ever your faithful and loving friend,

AMY.

CHAPTER IX.

“I have touched the highest point of all my greatness.”

HENRY EIGHTH.

A FEW days after Amy had written to Fanny, she noticed that when her father returned from the counting-house, he looked much agitated, and immediately retired, saying he should not take any dinner.

“Are you not well, father?” asked Amy, anxiously, as she followed him to his room.
“Does your head ache?”

“Something worse than the head-ache is the matter.”

“What is it, father?” said Amy, tenderly.
“Have you any other pain?”

“Yes, child, I have; and, what is worse, it is a pain that will go to the grave with me, and help to carry me there.”

“Father! dear father! what is it? I did not know of anything to make you unhappy. Why did not you tell me of it before? What can it be?”

"A hopeless disease — an incurable sorrow, when it seizes on an old man."

Mr. Weston's voice became tremulous ; he even wept. Amy was alarmed ; she had never seen her father so moved.

"Tell me, father, what is the matter ? What calamity has befallen you ? "

"The worst calamity that can befall a man ; that from which I have so fervently prayed to be spared ; that from which I have labored and toiled to escape ; that from which I thought I was secure ; that misery which comprehends all others."

"What — what is it ? O, dear father, speak ! tell me !" cried Amy, almost breathless with fear ; "tell me, I beseech you ! "

"Poverty in my old age !" groaned out the old man.

"And is that all, father ? " exclaimed Amy. "Thank God, if that is all ! I feared something much worse."

"And what worse than that could happen to your father, Amy ? Is there any greater misery than poverty, which could befall a man of my standing in society ? "

"Yes, father ; disgrace is worse. I did fear, from what you said, that some evil suspicion of wrong doing had fallen on your old age."

"And is not poverty a disgrace to a man who has always held such a place as I have in the world? Will it not be a shame to me, to be standing in the street, with you, my only daughter, on my arm, covered with the dust from the carriages of the mushroom gentry, who were once so glad to take their hats off, as we passed in ours? will not you feel mortified and degraded?"

"No, father; I can never feel that either you or I are disgraced by poverty, or be ashamed of the dust that falls upon me from any one's carriage. If we have our lives and health, father, and our honest name, we surely will not despair. Father, I feel so relieved at finding that this is all, that it almost seems to me now as if no real misfortune had befallen us. If I could only make you feel so too!"

"You never can, Amy. I see nothing but starvation and misery before us."

"No, no, father; we will be very happy. The small property I inherited from my mother will keep us from starving; and you don't know what a good economist I can be. Only don't despair, father, and we will yet be as happy as we have ever been."

"Never! never!" said her father. "I

am one of the many victims of this miserable republicanism. Where the swinish multitude can make laws and repeal them at their pleasure, there is no security for property. One man after another has failed, who owed me money; in consequence of the absurd policy of our government. I am worth almost nothing. What is left will not much more than pay my debts. I must sell my houses, and horses, and carriages, and live in the most economical way possible; and, but for your mother's property, I don't know but you would have to dress in factory cotton."

"If I can only see you happy, father, I shall not think of what material my dress is made."

"You will never see me happy again. I have spent my whole life in securing, as I supposed, a property which would put you and myself entirely above want — indeed, I hoped, in affluence, and establish you in society as the daughter of a man of my standing ought to be established; and here all my hopes are swept away in a moment, and I am left for the world to pity, and pass by, and soon forget."

Amy found it was vain to reason with her father. He considered her ideas of happiness

romantic and childish. She could not appeal to his religious feelings, for she knew that his gratitude to God, of which he often spoke in the days of his prosperity, was founded upon the idea, that he himself was peculiarly favored. He had hitherto viewed the Creator as a partial, not as a just Being. He did not love him because he was the Father and Benefactor of all, but because he thought he had a particular love for himself, and had given to him more than to his other children. Now, when he was stripped of the many-colored coat with which his self-love fancied he had been clothed, he thought the love which gave it was gone too, and his faith and gratitude were gone with it. He no longer talked of the designs of Providence ; he began to doubt if there was one. Amy listened patiently to his complaints, and tried, by the most watchful tenderness, to soothe his sufferings ; but she soon saw that he would not be comforted. The habits of activity, and industry, and economy, which she had cultivated for the last year, in order to enable her to do good to the poor, consistently with all her other duties, were now of the greatest service to her, in enabling her to assist her father in the change in their mode

of life, which their altered circumstances made necessary.

They took a small house, and adopted an entirely different style of living. Amy retained Ruth for their only domestic. In all their arrangements, she took care that her father's comfort should be most especially consulted. All the sacrifices she managed should, as far as possible, fall upon herself; all the indulgences that she thought they could allow themselves were for his comfort. Her father had gradually acquired the habit, from seeing Amy so efficient, of consulting her about every thing. All his affairs were now known to her. The amount of his income, (when all his debts were paid,) with what her own little property supplied, amounted to a sufficient sum to enable them to live in comfort, and allowed them some few of the luxuries of life.

"I think, Amy," said Mr. Weston, "that you might keep two domestics, a man and a woman; and that you might afford a fire in your bed-room; and that you might also have retained your copy of Audubon's birds."

"We could not have every thing, father; and there is one luxury of more importance to me than either of those, and which would

give me far more pleasure to retain ; and that, with your consent, I should like to be indulged in."

" And what is that, Amy ? "

" Provided you will ride him, so as to keep him in health, I should rather not part with Robinette."

Mr. Weston's health was very dependent upon exercise in the open air. He knew that it was Amy's knowledge of this, more than her attachment to her favorite horse, that induced her choice ; he felt the delicacy of her making it appear a favor to herself. Poverty had already opened to him some hitherto unknown springs of happiness. He sighed, but there was a better feeling than usual that moved him.

" Do as you please, dear," he said ; and he turned away to hide a tear, as he consented.

Ruth was a very efficient help to Amy, in her new mode of life. Although her labors were doubled, she never complained, and never seemed oppressed by them. Hers was always a service of love ; the wages she received, she considered a simple equivalent for her labor. Before she engaged herself to Miss Weston, she had inquired her character with the greatest particularity, expecting her

to do the same with regard to herself; for she said, "It must be a poor rule that did not work both ways." Amy was her idol—her beau ideal of excellence. She could not bear to see her work so hard as she now did. It was a real source of vexation to her. Neither could she be reconciled to seeing her deny herself so many of the luxuries to which she had hitherto been accustomed.

"I don't wish any fire in my room," said Amy to her, one morning, when she was stealing in very softly, to make it before she was up; "and if I did, I should not allow you, Ruth, to make it; you have too much work to do already."

"Now, ma'am, it's really ridiculous for you not to have a fire. It's no trouble to make it."

"But we cannot afford it, Ruth."

"Why, ma'am, you ought to have a fire. It don't cost but a trifle; and I'm sure, it's bad enough to be poor, without going without every thing you want into the bargain."

Amy smiled at Ruth's logic.

"I find it very easy, Ruth, to do without a fire; and if I cannot afford it, I must do without it, or do wrong; and that you would not have me do, I am sure."

Ruth flounced out of the room with a look of the most decided dissatisfaction.

Before Amy came down to breakfast, Ruth bounced up stairs again, and burst into her room. Her abrupt manner and her glowing face startled Amy.

“What’s the matter, Ruth?”

“I guess I got something now for you, Miss Amy, that you won’t make such a fuss about as you did about the fire;” and she handed her a letter from Edward.

Ruth’s natural delicacy forbade her even casting one look at Amy, before she left her to herself.

Who can dare to describe the state of feeling of a true and tender-hearted being like Amy, while reading a letter from her lover, from whom she had heard no tidings for a year? There are pictures called “The reading the Love-Letter.” The trembling anxiety, the untold joy, the quiet peace, which follow in bright and quick succession, each telling their story on the face as they pass, who can paint?—who can describe? And if we may not successfully paint, and cannot do justice to that which is seen, can we hope to unveil that which is not seen? Love-letters, if they are real love-letters, ought not to be

shown to any stranger; so our readers must not hope to see Amy's. It was only to be read, by those who saw her that day, in her light, elastic step, her glowing cheek, her cheerful voice, and, most of all, in the "harvest of her quiet eye," that seemed to shed love and joy upon every one on whom it rested.

"I have a letter from Edward," she said, when she met her father at breakfast. "He is very well, and very successful, and hopes to return in a year from next April. This is a little sooner than he at first feared he should be able to. He desires his respects to you, father, and his love to you, Ruth."

Ruth was standing still, with the coffee-pot in her hand, to listen to what Amy said.

"Thank him a thousand times, ma'am. They say 'love is a present for a mighty king;' and I'm sure, I set enough by Mr. Edward's, though I'm neither king nor queen, nor never want to be." Saying this, Ruth left the room.

"I am very glad," said Mr. Weston, "that Edward is doing so well. In some respects, Amy, I have always liked this connexion with him. Next to belonging to one of our first families, I think having no family at all

is to be desired. Don't you think so, my dear?"

"What, sir?" said Amy. Her thoughts had wandered far over the Pacific ocean.

Her father repeated his remark. "I fear, father, that I am such a sturdy republican, that I should care more for what the family were than who they were."

"All wrong, my dear; when Mr. Selmar finds that I am a poor man and have no money to give you when your are married, he will be very —"

"Glad of it," interrupted Amy, playfully. "He will like us both much better, father; depend upon it."

"Romance! foolish romance, my dear; however, as Ruth would say, Beggars must not be choosers, I have nothing to say against the match now. I dare say by and bye gentlemen in the first classes will be glad to marry their daughters to grocers, and tinkers, and coblers; I am sick of this new order of things."

"If, my dear father, coblers and tinkers should be well-educated men, surely we ought to rejoice; and if they are not, why should you suppose that well-educated women will fancy them for husbands?"

"Yes they will, just to show their independence ; young ladies now will fancy any thing out of the common way. The good old times are gone forever. If a young man were to make his proposals now, first to the father, the young lady forsooth would reject him on that very account, though all the wisest and best men I have ever known consider this only a proper respect for age and authority : the young people marry now-a-days only to please themselves."

Amy hoped that her father's charge against the young was deserved, but she forbore to say so.

"One thing, Amy, you must remember. Mr. Selmar has promised to say nothing of marriage till he has made a fortune ; I trust he will keep his word."

"Rely upon it, father ; Edward will be faithful to his promise ;" and here the conversation ended.

CHAPTER X.

"Her aged parent's warning words
She does not heed, she may not mind;
Her lover sick, all other fears
Are nought, are given to the wind."

NANCY'S BROOK.

AMY felt great anxiety about the effect of her letter upon Fanny. "If," she would say to herself, "If she would only show it to her husband, and it should be the means of establishing a more free and intimate communion of thought between them, Oh how happy I should be! It was not many days before she received the following answer:—

Dear Amy,

I should have replied to your letter before, but have been prevented by company at home, and engagements abroad. Such visiting, such running and driving, such hurrying to and fro as we have in New York. There

is more life and motion here in a week than there is in Boston or Philadelphia in a year.

Here we go up up up,
And here we go down down downy ;
Here we go backwards and forwards,
And here we go round round roundy.

I mean to propose to the city council to erect an arch at the entrance of Broadway, and put upon it these admirable lines of Mother Goose, who must have had a prospective vision of this noisy restless city, when she indited them. But I am getting to like New York better than I thought I should. People are too busy here to take much care of their neighbors' concerns. Perhaps you will account for my change of opinion entirely when I tell you that I am quite a favorite with them. They do n't patronize me ; they do n't set out to make much of me, as Mrs. Loveall does ; but they like me. We are out almost every evening, and the little time that we are at home we are as agreeable as possible to each other, and always have some pleasant gossip together. I vent all my naughtiness upon the oddities I see in company, and my husband fares all the better for it.

What strange creatures we are, that we should go to people we care nothing about, to learn to enjoy the society of those we love more than all the world besides. Go abroad in order to enjoy home. It seems a strange doctrine ; but, rely upon it, it is the right one. I am more and more convinced that all the little difficulties that must arise between friends, particularly married people, must be got over as easily as possible. Little things must be treated as little things, forgotten, passed over. Now, nothing helps us more effectually to drive away those petty domestic cares than large parties. The music, the careless chat, and the champaign, in what sweet oblivion do they drown all these matrimonial troubles !

I do assure you we come home from every party quite delighted with each other ; my husband, because the world admires me, and I, because he who is all the world to me, is pleased. Apropos — champaign. It reminds me of a little occurrence of the other day, that illustrates the truth of what I have just said. One of the unco gude of this city called upon me, (I wonder she should notice such a sinner as I am.) In the course of conversation this good lady expressed a deal of righte-

ous horror at what she called a too free use of champaign, at parties. My husband rather joined in with her censure, partly I suppose from complaisance. The parrot also did her part in this good talk. I bore it for some time, but at last could stand it no longer ; and said, I fear rather saucily to my husband, "Had not you and Mrs. Hawkins better join the Tetotums ?" The parrot supposing that I had only mistaken the word, corrected me, and said in her peculiar voice and manner, "Teetotals, Mrs. Roberts." This set me laughing which more than half affronted my husband ; and after the good lady left us we might have had one of those pleasant matrimonial duets, had not the servant happily announced the carriage to take us to Mr. Jacobs', where we were engaged to dine with half a dozen delightful people, not unco gude, and where all was forgotten ; and even my husband became reconciled again to champaign.

But I have not yet noticed the subject of your letter. Never suppose it possible, dear Amy, that I can be displeased with you ; your letter requires no apology ; asks for no forgiveness. The fault was mine, in giving you a wrong impression. I perceive I led

you to suppose that I am not happy. Surely I am as happy as any one has a right to be. I never thought that there was any very particular meaning in the word, or reality in the thing ; all the better on this very account, for the purpose of cheating us along our way. Every one sees something beautiful out of his reach, which he tries to get hold of, and can never touch, and he calls it happiness. It is the rainbow that our childish imaginations saw in the sky, for which our childish hearts still yearn, and which our childish hands still reach after, and strive to grasp, in vain ! Alas in vain ! it melts away as we seem to approach it, and leaves nothing over our heads but a dull and darkened sky, and the sad chilly feeling of disappointment.

I have almost done with this childish sport, I do not intend to chase rainbows any longer ; but gather the flowers in the garden of pleasure that lies at my feet ; and my husband seems to be of the same mind. Your letter made me cry, and that's not good for my eyes. I did not show it to him, for I knew that it would give him pain, and he would think immediately that I had made too serious a matter of some trifles, and given you a false impression with regard to the state

of my mind. Still I loved you, dear Amy, for writing it. It added another to the countless proofs you have given me of your faithful friendship, of your unwearied care and tenderness for one who has never deserved so rich a blessing. Farewell.

FANNY ROBERTS.

Amy was deeply disappointed at the entire failure of her letter. She had hoped to induce Fanny to think of the subject of it. She had hitherto been able to induce her to think of serious things, if it were only for a time. She saw that there was a change in her for the worse. What should she do? Her heart ached as she came to the conclusion that she could do nothing; as she remembered that important truth that no one can make another good, another religious. She was grieved and disappointed, but she did not despair. She kept up faithfully, her part of the correspondence. She always spoke the truth, painful as it might be to Fanny to hear it, and to her to say it, but with an unfailing love. She watched with faith and hope for the moment when she might by her sympathy or her advice speed her return to the true sources of happiness.

And thus did months roll on, leaving

Fanny as they passed, eagerly gathering as she had resolved, all the flowers of earthly pleasure that clustered around her path, sometimes sighing at their frailty, sometimes starting at the thorns that pierced her, yet still pressing them to her unsatisfied heart.

With Amy how different was the scene. Separated from her lover; anxious for his health and life; devoting herself to a father, between whom and herself there was no bond of union, except that which always must exist between the parent and the child; marking each hour of every day with the cheerful performance of its appropriate duty, and reaping a perpetual reward of unruffled peace. As the time approached for Edward's return, "Her spirit brightened like an inward sun," she cherished in her heart a hope, a joy, with which a stranger meddleth not.

Amy had ceased to count the months, even the weeks; she counted the days, aye even the hours when the news must come of the arrival of the vessel in which her lover was to return. It was expected every hour. The hour came. A friend sent word that the signal was up for the Speedwell, the vessel in which Selmar was expected to return. Who of us has not witnessed in himself, or others,

that it is more easy to bear suffering than great happiness with composure. Is it that in this life the heart is more acquainted with grief than with joy? Amy hastily quitted the room, trembling at the excess of her own emotions, and shrinking from the oppressive weight of a human eye.

When she returned, there was that holy calmness in her face which indicates that the peace within has come from a communion with Him who is the strength of our hearts.

"I suppose, my dear," said her father, "that we shall soon see Edward."

He calls him Edward, thought Amy ; and a flush of mingled joy passed like a sudden gleam of sunlight over her quiet face. An hour passed ; each minute lengthened as it came and went, without bringing him. Presently Ruth who had heard that the Speedwell had arrived, came in to ascertain what news there was of Mr. Edward. "We have not heard from him yet," said Amy to her eager questions. As she said this she kept her eyes fixed upon the door. She began to wonder why he did not come. She sat watching and listening with intense anxiety for the first sound of her lover's step. Ruth, who had found various excuses for remaining

in the room, observed this, and could not be silent ; and, forgetting even Mr. Weston's presence, attempted such consolation as she could call up at the moment.

"A watched pot never boils, Miss Amy. He 's there, and will soon come, you may be sure ; ill news travels fast ; you 'd have heard long enough ago if all was not well with Mr. Edward."

As she said this, the door-bell rang. Ruth went and quickly returned with a letter for Amy. It was not Edward's hand-writing. She broke the seal and read it.

" Her hands did quake
And tremble like a leaf of aspin green ;
And troubled blood through her whole face was seen
To come and go with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been."

"What is it, my child ?" said her father ; "What is the matter, dear Miss Amy !" cried the tender-hearted Ruth.

She put the letter into her father's hands. It was from the Captain of the vessel. He read it aloud. It stated that a few days before the arrival of the vessel, Mr. Selmar had been taken ill of a disease that at first resembled the Asiatic cholera ; that he was better,

but still quite ill, and that he had therefore been obliged to send him ashore at Hospital Island, where he knew he would be taken excellent care of; that as he knew of no relation of Mr. Selmar's, he thought it right to inform Miss Weston of his illness, as he was apprised of her connexion with him. The captain added that the boat would return to the island with Dr. ——, the attendant physician, at one o'clock, P. M., and would take any friend or letter to Mr. Selmar.

There was a fixed marble paleness in Amy's face, as she said in a calm determined manner to her father, "I shall go to him immediately."

"You! go yourself! Amy, are you insane?" exclaimed her father.

"Let me go! pray let me go!" said Ruth, at the same moment.

"No," answered Amy, "I must and shall go myself; can you think I would stay away from him, or let any one take my place by his sick bed?"

"But, Amy, think of what you are going to do; it is an unheard of thing for a young lady; and besides you may take the cholera if he has it,—you may take —"

"Father," said Amy, very affectionately,

but without wavering in her determination, “I must go ; fear not for me, dear father ! trust me all will be well. I must go to him.”

“ What will the world say, Amy ? ”

“ I care not what it says ! ” and her ashy paleness gave place to a flush of indignation at the thought of such a reason for remaining away from her lover.

“ Ruth would take as good care of him and better than you could,” said her father, “ for she is more used to nursing.”

“ There are,” said Amy, “ nurses enough and good ones, I doubt not, at the hospital ; but no one can be to him what I should be. Would I let another take care of you, father, if you were sick ? ”

“ But, Amy, think of it, for you to go alone ; you a young lady to go to Hospital Island, among entire strangers, surrounded by diseases of all sorts, to nurse a young man who is your lover ! how strange ! ”

“ Strange, father ! strange that I should go to him ! and yet you say he is my lover ! Strange indeed it would be if I did not go. Have I not openly acknowledged that I love him better than all the world besides ? and shall I, when he returns to his country dangerously ill, without a relation in the world,

shall I stay away from him, because a certain ceremony and form of law has not been performed that in the world's opinion gives me the privilege of taking care of him? Would you have me so heartless, father?"

"My dear Amy, the customs of society require the strictest precision in a young lady's conduct before marriage."

"Odious customs of society!" exclaimed Amy, "teaching prudery and hypocrisy the true elements and foundation principle of all vice, profaning holy nature, and by always supposing, taking the readiest way, to awaken the impure thoughts which they imagine to exist. A young lady may go to parties with her neck and shoulders all bare, and dance with young and old men of almost any character, and the customs of society are not outraged; but if she goes, in the sanctity of innocence and love, to watch over her lover on his sick bed, its nice sense of propriety is wounded. Thank God, I care not for it now, father. What is the opinion of the world to me now? what will it be to me if he should —oh my father! remember when you were a young man, and loved her who is in heaven."

Amy's over-excited feelings were relieved

by a passionate flood of tears, as the thought of her mother came to her mind, and she endeavored to recover her composure.

"I wish my child," said her father, much softened, "that your mother were indeed here to go with you, if you do still insist upon going, which I cannot approve of."

"Her spirit will be with me, father; trust me to its guidance and protection. Fear nothing for me!"

Mr. Weston made no further resistance to Amy's determination. He had learned that it was in vain to oppose his authority or that of public opinion, to her convictions of duty. He told her that if she was determined upon such a strange step, he should, as her father, do all he could to save her from the severe remarks which the world would make upon her conduct. He went himself and obtained permission of the proper authorities for her to go to the island, and called upon Dr. S. the hospital physician, and ascertained that he was a married man, and that his wife would be a friend to Amy; that there was a respectable matron who superintended the hospital, and with whom she could board during the time it might be necessary for her to remain at the island. The boat was to return at one

o'clock, and Amy made what arrangements were necessary to go at that time. She gave all her directions to Ruth about the management of the family, and care of her father during her absence, with such precision, such calmness, that a common observer would not have perceived the deep under current of intense feeling on which her soul was borne away from all present things; and which gave her a sort of strange unconsciousness while she was attending to the performance of these duties.

"Here ma'am," said Ruth, "I have brought you something to eat before you go, for it will really be ridiculous for you to go among all them sick folks with nothing but trouble to stay your stomach." As she said this, Ruth placed a waiter covered with the most tempting luncheon which her art and knowledge of Amy's tastes enabled her to provide.

"Thank you, Ruth, but I fear I have not time to take anything."

"Prayers and provender never hindered a journey, Miss Amy; I warrant you'll not feel like eating dinner at the hospital; and how are you going to do anything when you get there, if you don't eat something to strengthen you before you go?"

"Perhaps you are right," said Amy, and she sat down mechanically and ate something. There was a childlike submission to Ruth's judgment in her manner of taking the food which she offered, which was very gratifying to the vanity as well as affection of this most excellent personage, and encouraged her to indulge her talking propensity.

"I am proper glad, Miss Amy, that you have determined to go down to the hospital and see to Mr. Edward yourself, without minding what folks say. And what if they should say hard things against you? scandal is like dirt; it will rub out when it dries. I was in the room, ma'am, when you said all that to Mr. Weston about not caring so much for the world as you did for Mr. Edward; and it put me in mind of what Aunt Polly said once when folks talked to her about what the world would say to her for tending her sweetheart in a fever. She said, 'I have long ago done caring for the asses, and care only for Saul;' she was a master hand for quoting scripture. Oh how she did take on when he died! I was dreadful sorry for her; but it was a great comfort for her to know that she had done every thing for him that mortal could do; but man provides, and God

decides ! But there 's the bell, I must go to it."

She returned to say that the Dr. was at the door, and ready to attend Miss Weston to the boat.

As she put her keys into Ruth's hand, Amy said to her, "I know Ruth that you will take the best care of my father. Be sure to remind him daily of his ride. Have no fear for me."

She could not speak to her father ; she kissed him and hurried off.

CHAPTER XI.

"The billows they tumble with might, with might,
She flings out her voice to the darksome night;
Her bosom is heaving with sorrow."

WALLENSTEIN.

Amy was soon seated in the boat, by the side of the doctor, on her way to the island. After having ascertained from him every thing she could, with regard to Edward's case, she sunk into a profound silence.

The air was balmy soft. Here and there a light, fleecy cloud floated in the blue depths of the quiet heavens. The boat, as it danced along, looked like a plaything upon the restless, trembling waves of the glad ocean. All around looked bright and glorious, but all was unheeded by Amy. She saw not the glittering spires, nor the bristling masts at the noble wharves of the city. The neighboring heights, the green islands, the white sails, were to her as if they were not. She heard not the occasional remarks of the doctor, kindly intended to interest her, and help

her bear her anxious thoughts. There was an unutterable, an overwhelming feeling in her heart, that made her unconscious of every thing around her. Deep called unto deep in her soul. She sat in silence, looking fixedly at the island which they were fast approaching, as though in that little spot was concentrated all that life could give her of joy or sorrow.

They arrived. The doctor introduced her to the kind matron of the hospital, and left her while he went to visit his patient, saying that he would soon be with her again. He returned with a smile on his face, that was like life to Amy's heart.

"I find Mr. Selmar better," he said ; "at least, as far as I can judge for the present ; for he is asleep, which is a good symptom. If you can walk like a spirit, so as to be sure not to awake him, you can go and look at him ; but if he should awake, you must be sure that you leave him without his recognizing you, as he has no idea of seeing you, and it would be a dangerous excitement to him."

Amy promised to obey his directions, and followed the doctor to her lover's apartment. The door was open. She entered the dark-

ened room on tiptoe, scarcely breathing, lest she should awake him. She came to the bed-side. It was so dark she could not distinguish anything; she must wait till her eye adapts its vision to the dim light. O, how her soul was agonized, lest he should awake before she had seen and been satisfied that it was indeed the face of her dearest earthly friend that she was gazing at! Presently, a shadowy outline seemed to emerge from the darkness. Still she could not recognize a single feature of the face. It grew a little more distinct. She stooped over him, straining every faculty to see. He moved his arm round, and his hand grasped a fold of her dress. She stood still as death, lest he should awake. He was quiet again, and his fingers relaxed their hold. Again she stooped over him, and her whole figure seemed instinct with the desire to see that beloved face. At last, deathly pale, and wasted, his eyes sunken in their sockets, she saw him distinctly—the same, only so changed by disease!

For many minutes, Amy stood breathless and motionless, gazing, with her whole soul, upon her sleeping lover, when he suddenly started, and awoke. She left the room

before he perceived her. She met the physician at the door, who entered without speaking. With the most intense anxiety, Amy stood waiting in the passage-way for the return of the doctor. She saw, at the first glance that she caught of his face, as he came from the apartment, that his decision was unfavorable to her hopes. She felt her lips and tongue grow rigid, as she attempted to speak and ask what her heart so trembled to know.

“Cannot I go in? Is he not better?”

“I am disappointed,” said the doctor, “at the state in which I find him. I thought he would awake better; it is not so. I think it would not be well for him to see you now; any great excitement might injure him. I dare not venture it. He is more ill than he has been. There must be some change soon. We must hope for the best. To-night will be the critical time.”

“Oh! let me watch by him to-night,” said Amy.

“I fear that he would recognize you; for he has his senses perfectly. He has a most excellent nurse; and I will be with him myself as much as possible, and you shall be kept informed of his state. Let me conduct

you to the apartment which Mrs. —— has appropriated to you."

Amy unconsciously suffered herself to be led to her room. As soon as she was alone, it seemed as if her overwrought spirit suddenly lost all possession of itself. Grief, fear, and despair, took alternate possession of her soul.

"Why," cried she, "did I submit so tamely to be taken away from him? Why did I not remain, in spite of the doctor's prohibition? I shall never hear him speak my name again. If I could only hear him breathe! — if I could but see him move, and know that he is yet alive! O, God! how can I bear this terrible suspense? If he should die, O, Father of mercies, let me die with him! Why is it that thou dost implant these deathless affections in our hearts, and then snatch away from us the beings whom thou thyself hast bidden us to love? Oh! this sorrow is greater than I can bear!"

Tears — blessed tears at last came to her relief, and Amy's soul grew more calm. All was still in the house, save the occasional, careful step of some one of the nurses, upon some errand for her patient. Now, for the first time, Amy heard, near by, the slow,

solemn roar of the eternal waves of ocean. As she listened, the sound seemed to come nearer and nearer; and the tumult in her heart grew calmer and calmer, as the thought of that great Being, whose voice can still the restless tide of human passions, resumed its place in her mind. She approached the window. The distant spires of the city—the green islands, looking like emeralds decking the bosom of the deep—the countless white sails—the blue, trembling waves of the glad ocean—the piles of fleecy clouds—all were bathed in a rich flood of golden light from the setting sun. There was a fulness of life—a magnificence of beauty, and grandeur, and loveliness, spread before her, that seemed to Amy's soul like a new revelation of the love of God.

"Surely," said Amy, "he does not willingly afflict us. As a father pitith his children, so pitith he us. Shall I fear Him who is all love? Did not he, who walked upon the tossing billows of the sea, pass erect, also, over the troubled waves of sorrow and suffering in this mortal life? Did he not say, 'Be not afraid?' Are not our affections more enduring, more deep and boundless, than this wide, unfathomed sea, or these illimitable

skies? Is not the true heart every moment declaring its own immortality? Can the circumstance of what we call death destroy it? Did we not know, when we first loved, that the sword of separation must enter every heart? but we thought not so soon. Yet, what is soon or late, when eternity is the question? Still, it is bitter to part now. May I not pray as Jesus prayed,—‘If it be possible, let this cup pass from me?’”

As Amy was thus communing with God and her own soul, her eyes fixed upon the glorious scene which first attracted her attention, the sunlight gradually died away, and then came on the soft, gray twilight, till the stars, one after another, seemed to open their bright eyes upon the quiet waters, and

“The moon at length, apparent queen,
Unveiled her peerless light, and o'er the dark
Her silver mantle threw.”

All rebellious feelings were rebuked in Amy’s heart, and a holy trust and a quiet submission had taken their place, when she was startled by hearing a knock at her door. It was the matron of the hospital, who had come to invite her to join her at her evening meal. She added, that the doctor was to take tea

with her, and then would tell her what he thought of Mr. Selmar's present state. They had been trying some other remedies, from which he hoped some good effects.

"Whoever comes to a hospital, miss," said the matron, "must keep up a good heart, and take care of herself, or she will soon be one of the patients. Many get well who are as sick as Mr. Selmar. He is young, and the chances are in his favor."

Amy saw that it was, in fact, pity for her, that induced the good matron to assume a sort of roughness of manner, which she thought would help her guest to endure the trial that awaited her. She also read, in the tender respect of the doctor's manner, and compassionate tone of his voice, an indication of his fears lest the sorrow she dreaded would fall upon her.

"If," said the doctor, "the remedies we apply to-night should be successful, and if his constitution is strong enough to carry him through a few more hours of suffering, I shall feel sanguine of his recovery."

He urged Miss Weston to try to take some rest, and promised to send her word by the nurse, during the night, how his patient was. With this promise, Amy returned to her room.

Much did she suffer during those dark hours ; but, as she sat all night long, looking up at the glowing heavens, and listening to the perpetual hymn of the waves, hope and peace settled more deeply and permanently in the recesses of her soul. The spirit of resignation seemed to descend upon her from the silent skies. It was past midnight, when she heard a footstep approaching her room. She quickly opened the door. It was the matron.

“ I thought,” said the good lady, “ that, as you were so anxious, I would come and tell you about the gentleman myself, as I was up, and had been in to see him. He is rather better, and the doctor says every thing seems more favorable, though he cannot say he is out of danger yet. Now, dear, do go to bed. He ’ll get well, I dare say.”

The next news was at daylight, and was still more encouraging ; and in the morning, at breakfast, the doctor pronounced him decidedly better.

“ I think,” said the doctor, “ that I might venture, in the course of this morning, to let Mr. Selmar know you are here, and even to let you see him, if you could be very calm and judicious.”

"I am sure I could," said Amy. "Have no fear for my good behavior."

The doctor said that he had left him asleep, and that he would let him know she was there when he awoke, if he should be really better.

"You are better," said the doctor to Mr. Selmar, when he awoke.

"O, yes," he replied; "I am myself again."

"Not quite," said the doctor. "It will be a long while before you are well. The captain of your vessel has informed your friends in Boston that you were detained here by illness."

A faint color overspread Edward's face, and passed instantly away, as the doctor said this.

"Have you any friends that you should like to see here particularly?" asked the doctor.

"Yes—one; but I suppose it would be in vain for me to desire it."

"Why so, my friend?"

"It is a lady to whom I am engaged. Her father would never consent to her coming." As Edward said this, his face grew deadly pale again.

"Do you think," said the doctor, "that you could bear the excitement of seeing her, if she were to come?"

"O, yes! yes! it would restore me to life. When I am asleep, I dream she is by my bed-side. I dreamed yesterday that she had come to me; but it would be too great happiness to be real."

"I think not. I think you may see her," said the doctor.

"How could I? Would she come? Is it possible?"

"Yes. She is now on the island; and if you could promise to behave like a rational being, and keep yourself calm, you may see her. I think it would not hurt you."

"Thank God! thank God! This is more than I hoped;" and as he clasped his hands, and looked up to heaven, he wept like a child. "I feel that I am very weak," he said, after a few minutes; "but it will do me good to see her, and I will be quite calm."

"Refrain even from speaking," said the doctor. "Remember your life is at stake. I will bring your friend to you."

"Fear not," said Amy, as the doctor was urging her to be very calm. "I will be as quiet and discreet as you can desire."

Softly and quietly she approached Edward's bed-side. As she stooped to kiss his feverish lips, she whispered, "Remember, dear Edward, you must be very still and calm, or I cannot be with you. Say nothing now."

Edward did not attempt to utter a word ; he could not. He took her hand — covered it with kisses ; he put it on his dry, aching forehead, and he felt as if it had a healing power in it. As Amy stooped over her lover's pillow, looking intently at him, her whole soul in her face, it seemed as if a light went forth from it, that might have revived the dying.

"O, Amy," he said, "that look alone would restore me."

"Hush ! hush !" she said, "or I must leave you."

The doctor was right in his opinion that Edward's disease had begun to yield ; but his residence in the hot climate of Canton had so deranged his system, that he required the strictest attention and the most watchful care, to prevent a relapse, which would, in all probability, have been fatal. How often did Amy rejoice that she was present, to administer all those little, nameless comforts which contribute so much to the relief of the

patient, during the long hours of feverish restlessness, which belong to a lingering recovery from severe illness! She read to him; she sang to him; she sat silent with him, at her sewing-work, for hours together. As he became able to engage in conversation, she told him of her father's loss of property, at which Edward could not help rejoicing. She also acquainted him with her anxiety about Fanny and her husband.

One or two letters passed between Amy and Fanny during her stay at the island, one of which, from Fanny, we transcribe.

Dear Amy,

I am rejoiced to hear that Edward is really getting well. How the good folks, who take such excellent care of their neighbors, will stare, and wonder, and moralize at your conduct, in going to Hospital Island, to take care of your sick lover! Mrs. Lovell, in especial; with her sentimentality on the one hand, and her worldly-mindedness on the other, how can she find safety in any opinion upon the subject? She will have to maintain a sort of armed neutrality, ready to side with whichever shall prove not the weaker, but the stronger party.

How is it, Amy, that I am not jealous of you? When I told Mr. Roberts of your going to the island, to take care of your lover, in spite of contagion and scandal, he answered, "If it were any other woman I know, I should be surprised; but Amy always acts with sense and feeling, and without asking what people will say." It is very true, you are the only woman he knows, who he thinks always acts right. Why did he not try to marry you? Edward and I might have consoled ourselves, perhaps, by making the best or the worst of each other. He is rather of the touch-me-not order; and we should have quarrelled merrily from morning till night, one day, and been delightful with all our might to each other all the next, to make up for it. What a pleasing variety our lives would have presented! We should not have had any long accounts on hand, but have paid off every charge as we went along. Now, my husband has terrible arrears against me; and, ah! if he ever calls upon me for a just settlement, what a poor bankrupt I shall be! Bankrupt, alas! in that only wealth that can never be recovered when once lost — happiness! Happiness! that word invented by some star-gazing poet; all

the better for his purpose, because it is so purely ideal. But, I am turning away from my subject, which was, the moral uses of quarrels among friends. I have changed my opinion upon this subject. I used to think that it was best to pass over slight offences ; but I tell you, Amy, a little, short, well-bred, matrimonial quarrel, though somewhat disagreeable at first, is useful in the end. It is like a dose of cremor tartar ; it sweetens the blood. Or, if you will have a more poetical comparison, it is like a slight thunder-storm ; and the clearing up is so beautiful ! and then comes the rainbow of reconciliation ; and the air is so much purer and fresher afterwards ! I am enamored of the very thought of a quarrel with my husband. But he never gives me an opportunity. He never speaks ; and he is so civil, and so serious. If he would only box my ears, or whip me with a stick as big, or bigger, than the law allows, I should — “be very angry,” you will say. True ; but this icy coldness would vanish ; this death-like stillness, this portentous silence, would be broken, that seems to me to increase hourly, and as if it would finally turn me into stone.

Do you know I begin to think that the

housekeeper must have some strange influence? I never felt so till I came here; and she looks unlike any human thing I ever knew. The house is so still, that you hear her terrible tread, in the remotest part of it. My husband is with his father (whose health fails daily) nearly all the time; and I am obliged to keep Willy in his nursery, lest he should make a noise. When I can bear it no longer, I go out, or I should go mad; every thing is so dull, so solemn, so strange. My husband insists upon accepting every invitation; but when it is time to go, he says, "Fanny, I hope you will go. I must stay with my father." If I object to leaving him, he urges me to go, and says, "There is no reason why you should stay at home. I wish you to have all the pleasure you can. I know it is very dull here. You will oblige me by going;" and so I go; but I have no heart in it. Indeed, I have no heart in any thing. My beautiful, my precious boy, even he makes me cry. I cannot tell why, but so it is. He now runs alone, and begins to talk. The other day, when he was sitting in my lap, the tears were running fast (I cannot tell why) down my cheeks. He took up his little frock, and wiped them, and said,

"Mamma hurt? Do n't cry, mamma; I call papa to kiss the place, and make it well."

O, Amy, it seemed, when he said this, as if my silly heart would break. Just then, my husband came in, and the child ran and pulled him towards me. I know not what evil spirit possessed me; but when he asked me what was the matter, I answered him in a reproachful tone, "O, nothing; only I am homesick and heart-sick," and hurried out of the room to hide my tears. I was ashamed and grieved at my unkindness to him, and came back, a minute afterwards, to tell him so; but he had gone into his father's room, and I did not see him again till dinner-time. When he met me then, it was with that frigid, silent politeness, which is worse to me than the rudest censure. If that bird of evil omen had not been present, perhaps I might have conquered my pride, and tried to melt the icy coldness that was so repulsive to me; but he kept her in conversation on purpose, I believe, after dinner, in order to avoid a tete-a-tete with me. In the evening, I went to the opera with Mrs. ——, (who is always delightful,) and forgot for a while, in the delicious music I heard there, the pain and folly of the morning. Now, if he had only

put me in the closet, as we do a naughty child, saying, too, with the true nursery tone, "Now you have something to cry for," and kept me there till I had promised to be good, how much easier it would have been to bear it! I always hated politeness, and now more than ever.

I tell you, Amy, that what is called good breeding and civility is the bane of all real happiness at home. If Roberts and I had both been brought up to the tailor's trade, we should enjoy ourselves as married people ought to. If I did wrong, my husband would shake the yard-measure at me, and I should take the press-board to defend myself, and then we should laugh at our own nonsense, and kiss and be friends. Whatever else you and Edward may do, after you are married, avoid politeness more than you would a pestilence.

I ought, dear Amy, to close my letter after giving you such a piece of sage advice. You must not suppose I am insensible to, or have forgotten all that you have suffered during Edward's illness, or all you now enjoy. I have still a sort of traditional recollection of something called happiness, by which I can

measure your present emotions ; and my love for you is true and unchanged. Farewell.

Ever yours,

FANNY ROBERTS.

As soon as the physician pronounced Edward to be so far well as that his recovery did not depend upon careful nursing, Amy thought it right to return home. A week after he was able to follow her. Even Mr. Weston received him with a cordial welcome, that seemed to have no reference to the opinion of the world, and that forgot to ask the sanction of the wisest and best.

Ruth was beside herself with joy, at seeing him again. "Really, Miss Amy," she said, "I was so glad to see him that I should have given him a good hug, if I had not thought it would look ridiculous."

CHAPTER XII.

“The best friends are those who stimulate each other to good.”

ARABIAN PROVERB.

THE property which Edward had acquired during his absence barely satisfied Mr. Weston’s ambition. When he and Amy asked his consent to their marriage, he answered that “He thought in some respects it would be as well that the ceremony should be performed soon ; for, as his daughter had shown to the whole world, in such an unprecedented way, that he was her decided choice, it was not probable now that she would alter her mind ; and that as Mr. Selmar, though not rich, had now a respectable property, he had no further objection to make to their marriage.” He even went so far as to give Edward his hand in what he intended for a paternal manner, and to express an unqualified wish for their future happiness. They

resolved to dispense with all unmeaning parade, all senseless forms at their marriage.

"As I understand this ceremony," said Edward, "it is publicly and solemnly consecrating ourselves to each other, and asking the blessing and the assistance of God in the performance of the new duties upon which we enter, the new happiness which we anticipate. Shall we not be married in church?"

Amy said this had always been her favorite wish; and, although it was not customary in their church, the clergyman readily acquiesced.

As soon as the day was fixed, Amy wrote to invite her friend Fanny and her husband to be present at their wedding, and join them upon an excursion of a few days in the country, which Mr. Weston who was in an unusually genial state of mind, had himself proposed. Fanny replied,

Dear Amy,

Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be with you at this time; but my husband cannot leave his father, who is very infirm, and I cannot well come without him. I console myself for this privation by thinking how many tears I am saved from shedding by

remaining at home. No one has time to shed tears in New York, although I occasionally indulge myself in this luxury when no one sees me. I have always thought a wedding a most melancholy occasion. At births, and at deaths, there is every thing to hope for the individual ; they are both beginnings of new life ; but at weddings it is not so. All that is unlimited, all that is romantic, all that is poetical and hopeful in the connexion between lovers, is in the first mutual confession, the first sweet promise of devoted love. That is the true bridal of hearts, that is their real festal day ; but the stiff, formal, precise, parading wedding day ; how it comes with its cold prosaic solemnity, and dissolves all the delicious enchantments in which the heart has revelled with an overflowing fulness. Ah ! if we could but stop these beautiful hours, and live them over and over again in one eternal round ! but, alas ! how swiftly did mine fly away.

Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning dew
Ne'er to be found again.

Do n't blame me, Amy ; it is not I that am to blame ; it is the nature of things. Who

finds fault with the rose, or the rainbow, or the butterfly, or the dew-drop, that they are as transient as they are beautiful! The world loves to appear happy ; but there is a great deal of pretence, and pride, and self-glorification in all this. Every one around me supposes that I am very happy, and that is one reason that my society is so much courted ; they hope to catch a little of the joy which they think is in my heart. Like me, they have it not within, and hope to find it somewhere out of themselves. Each one keeps his own secret. They know not, these craving souls, to what bankrupt hearts they go asking for help, nor upon what fictitious foundations the drafts are made that they receive so eagerly, and that pass so readily with a world in which almost every individual has agreed to cheat and to be cheated.

It does seem unkind, I know, to croak like a bird of evil omen at the idea of your wedding day, my dear Amy ; but you have always begged me to speak the truth, to say all that is in my heart to you. You have always said that you preferred to know the worst ; and I find when I am speaking or writing to you, that all the reserves, all the disguises, which come upon me at other

times, and in the presence of others, fall off, and I breathe out every feeling, and open every thought, as if to a disembodied spirit that I know is all tenderness and forgiveness. If there lives a being on this earth whose happiness is founded upon realities, whose heart is so fixed upon heavenly things, that nothing can shake it, it is yours ; but the test, the touch-stone will soon be applied, and it will do you no harm to be warned beforehand.

You may suppose from this that I have a fit of the blues, or that my husband is not kind to me, or that I find I was mistaken in his character. No such thing. I am often very gay, I am more in society than ever. When my husband and I are together, we are very polite to each other ; he never finds fault with me now, and he is just what he always was — you know him, dear Amy ; but there is no reasoning about these things. We cannot be reasoned into happiness or any other feeling. It is one of the falsehoods of the good, as they are called, that they pretend that we are accountable for our feelings. They say we ought to be happy. What an absurdity ! How hopeful a subject for such preachers was the man who said he had been trying all his life to be spontaneous.

The idea of trying to be spontaneous, brings to my mind our friend Mrs. Loveall. She and Mr. Loveall have been here with two of the Miss Lovealls. How she did my-dear-me, when I called upon her! and how she did show off the young ladies to Mr. Somers who was there! Three hundred thousand dollars, writes poetry, and belongs to one of our first families, she told me after he left us. **Query.** What were they, these first families originally? Cobblers or tinkers? She, however, dwelt only upon his poetical talents and intellectual charms. By the bye, dear, there 's a pattern couple for you! They are as civil as two pickpockets to each other. It is always "Just as you please my dear; ladies should govern in all things," and on her part, "I am ready, Mr. Lovell, to do as you shall decide is best," and to the young ladies it is, "Do n't forget the injunctions of your Papa; his will should be consulted in every thing, my dear." I heard her once deliver a homily upon the duties of wives. I had some suspicion it was meant for me; so I remarked that I thought the idea of a woman obeying her husband was now among the acknowledged barbarisms of older times; it was altogether obsolete among well-bred folks.

"I," she replied "am old-fashioned enough to think that the poet had the true notion of the dignity of woman when he said, she

"Charms by accepting, by submitting sways."

"Does not that intimate," I replied, "that to govern is the great object with women? only that as the power cannot be obtained by open and fair means, it must be gained by contrivance." I asked this with a due reverence in my manner.

She answered with a patronizing sentimental smile. "The truth is, my dear, men enjoy the chains that are hidden by the flowers that love twines around them."

"You think, then," I said, "that when men call themselves the slaves of the fair sex, it is no figure of speech, but sober reality."

"Men," she said, "have a right to govern by the law of the land; and in all externals are, and should be masters; they are the visible, the acknowledged head."

"Woman, then," I said, "if she is only cunning, is the real, man the apparent, head of the family?"

"No, no," said Mrs. Lovell. "I am afraid, my dear, you are a little heretical,

upon this subject. But Mr. Lovell and I early came to an understanding with regard to these matters ; and I think that I owe the unparalleled felicity of my married life to adhering strictly to these principles."

I asked a lady the other day, who knew them intimately, whether they seemed happy together. "O, yes," she answered ; "you never hear a debate, not even a discussion, between them. He is almost always in his study, and she always in the drawing-room. They treat each other with the most profound respect, and each goes on in his own course, as freely as if the other was not in being."

It is a shame, at this moment, dear Amy, when your mind is occupied so entirely with other things, to send you a letter filled with such nonsense. I wish you could see my beautiful little Willy. I have no right to anything so angelic. O, why was I ever obliged to leave you ? Bless you ! Heaven bless you ! Still remember and love your old playmate. Come what will, let me still be your dear

FANNY.

A few weeks after her return, Amy wrote to her cousin :—

Dear Fanny,

O, if I could only talk with you, instead of writing, I have so much that I want to say to you ! and when one's heart is so full, words are so inadequate ! "Begin," you will say, "and tell on, just as the children do ;" and so I will.

I told you, in my last, that we were to be married at church ; and so we were. My friend, Miss Treville, who was present, says there were not many people there. I thought, beforehand, that it would be very disagreeable to me, to have any but my most intimate friends present ; but I had no idea of the absorbing nature of the emotions I should experience. I was perfectly unconscious of the presence of any human being except my husband. The church might have been full, and I should not have known it. A deep, unutterable, religious calmness took possession of my soul. It was the most holy, the most perfectly blissful moment of my whole life. I saw nothing. I heard the prayer as not hearing it. There was a more perfect prayer rising silently and unbidden from my own heart. A strange, unearthly influence seemed to be upon me, when I felt the pressure of Edward's hand, and realized that we were

one for time and for eternity. The first thing that brought me to this world again was the audible sobs of friend Ruth, who was quite near me, and the consciousness that Edward was leading me out of the church to the carriage. Before I stepped in, I gave the dear soul my hand, which she squeezed in such a way as to put it beyond all doubt, that I was yet in the body, and still subject to its infirmities. I could hardly help wringing my hand with pain, as soon as I was in the carriage.

If you had been with me, you would have highly enjoyed a scene that took place between Ruth and Jerry, the day before we were married. I was in the kitchen, trying to persuade Ruth that a colored crape gown, which Edward had brought for her from Canton, would do for her to wear at my wedding.

"They say, ma'am, that it is a bad sign, to go to a wedding in anything but white; and though this gown I'm fixing up is rather short, yet at meeting nobody will see my feet; and I shall feel better in it, I know."

"But, Ruth," I said, "I did not think you were so superstitious."

"And I am sure, Miss Amy, I am not su-

perstitious ; but there are some signs that always do come true. Now, when scissors stick into the floor when they fall, I always expect a stranger ; and I never saw any good come of singing before breakfast, or going to a wedding in a dark gown ; and as for a bride to dress in colors, I think it would be nothing more nor less than a tempting of Providence."

Just then, Jerry entered.

" Did not I tell you ? " said Ruth. " Look there at my scissors sticking up in the floor, and there is Jerry."

Jerry came up to me in his peculiar, fidgetty way, expressing his great joy at seeing me, and at Mr. Selmar's return, and presently said, " Well, I suppose your head is in such a whirl, Ruth, that you don't want to answer a question I came to ask you. Perhaps I had better not stay now."

" He that is dizzy thinks the world turns round," replied Ruth. " I don't care much, Jerry, for your staying at any time ; but I'm not so busy but I have time enough to answer any of your questions. It does not take much wit to answer them, you know."

" I wanted to know what time I might come to-morrow," said Jerry.

" Better come to breakfast, Jerry," I an-

swered. "Mr. Selmar has a present for you, that he brought from China, and will be glad to see you, I know."

The poor fellow was so delighted, that, in going out, he stumbled headlong over a chair, and actually fell sprawling on the floor. Ruth burst into a hearty laugh, and cried out after him, as he was trying hard to escape her, "Better slip with the foot than the tongue, Jerry."

Miss Treville tells me that Ruth's appearance was very droll at the wedding. She put on the white gown over a dark skirt, and, in the strength of her faith that her feet would not show, wore dark stockings. I did not see her, or I should have taken care that she was properly dressed. She stood, she says, with her hands clasped, and her head run out, (you know how tall she is,) looking intently in my face during the whole ceremony, the big tears running fast down her cheeks all the time, and she apparently unconscious of it, till at last she began to sob aloud, when, as I mentioned to you, I heard her. Dear soul! If souls shaped bodies, with all her oddities, what a beautiful form would be hers!

I enjoyed the journey, but I was very glad

to return home to the actual duties of life. The true value of the ideal is to prepare for the real. If we ascend the mount, in search of inspiration, it must be for the sake of bringing it down with us, to guide and govern us as we pass through the wilderness to the holy land. My father has consented to live with us. He seems very happy, and I hope we shall make his old age comfortable. We have been at home about three weeks. The mornings my husband gives to business, the afternoons and evenings to reading and social enjoyment.

Now, dear Fanny, I have a confession to make. I showed your last letter to Edward. We have set out upon the principle to hide nothing, positively nothing, from each other ; to have no separate interests, no separate pleasures, no separate duties, any farther than is absolutely necessary. I know that I cannot help him transact his business at the counting-room, neither can he assist me in my household affairs ; but whenever, and in whatever way, we can be mutually interested and occupied, we shall act together. Now, it is but fair that you should know this, dear Fanny, as it may influence you in your correspondence with me ; but I trust and hope

it will not prevent your writing to me with the same confidence as ever. We do not agree with you, that the first assurance of mutual love is the happiest moment, or that all that is poetical and unlimited in love is before marriage. We have, to be sure, been married only six weeks; but we prefer the constant intimacy, the hourly devotion, the entire freedom, the perfect confidence, the serene assurance of reality, which belong to married life, to the feverish delight, the anxious fears, the thrilling pleasures, the fluctuating hopes, the romantic dreams of the most happy courtship. If marriage is what it ought to be, it is the exchange of ideal for real bliss; of uncertain hopes for the most joyful possession; of earthly tumult for heavenly peace. This is our present belief. We do not expect unmixed happiness. We know that we are both very imperfect beings; but we are sure, that if we are only true to each other and to ourselves, we can still love one another, in spite of our defects. This perfect oneness of mind does not imply the loss of individuality. The most perfect harmony is the result not of the repetition of the same notes, but only requires that the different parts should perfectly accord. I

have, my dear Fanny, much more to say upon this subject, but I fear that my letter is already of an unreasonable length. If my views change, I promise to tell you so.

Ever yours,

AMY SELMAR.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Can fancy paint more finished happiness ?
All who knew envied, but in envy loved.”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

THE most strenuous advocate for the exclusive importance of a woman's being an adept at all those employments which belong particularly to her department in the conduct of a family, would have been satisfied with Amy's skill in housekeeping. Every one, who entered her father's house, could not but notice the beautiful order that prevailed. There was nothing of what is so emphatically and well called *fussing*, upon extraordinary occasions. While her father was rich, and the same when he was comparatively poor, she adhered to a mode of living which she thought was properly conformed to his means. Upon the subject of entertaining company, it was her principle, to provide more amply, not differently, for guests. While they were rich, this required no sacrifice, and was com-

paratively an easy thing, and gave her the full enjoyment of society ; but when their means became limited, it required some effort of principle, to resist the temptation of adopting a style, when company came, which they could not usually afford. Her father was always urging her to this sort of display ; but Amy was faithful to her principle, of making no false pretences.

"I wish," she would say to her father, "to be truly hospitable, and yet to enjoy our visitors. Now, if we expend money in entertaining them, which we cannot afford, I cannot take pleasure in seeing them ; for I should feel as if we were doing wrong. Let us appear to the world as we really are ; our welcome to our friends will be as sincere as ever."

"The world will soon forget us, if we do not conform to its customs," said her father.

"But there is a dignity and truth in living according to our means, that even the world will acknowledge and respect, father ; and our real friends will surely not forsake us."

They thus had an opportunity of finding out who visited them for the sake of the style in which they lived, and who out of real regard. Mr. Weston was surprised to see

that some of those, whom he considered his fastest friends, fell away with his fine houses and elegant carriage and horses ; and he was still more astonished to see that some, whom he had looked down upon or forgotten, stood by him and his daughter in what he considered their day of adversity.

In her treatment of the domestics, Amy never forgot that we are all equally the children of God. She ever recognized the truth, that the difference between the employer and those whom he employs is adventitious and accidental — imposing mutual duties, but leaving the natural rights of each the same. She felt that the heaviest and most sacred obligation rested upon the most favored party. She thought that he, who pays money for faithful services, always gains what is, in itself, more valuable than what he gives ; and that if, in addition, he receives confidence and affection, he has given the perishable for the imperishable treasure, and that the bargain is unfair, unless he returns love for love. Some will say, “ All this is very excellent ; these are grand principles, and show that Amy had a just notion of Christianity ; but it does not prove her a perfect housekeeper. Could she make puddings and pies, and did she under-

stand the whole arcana of the pantry and larder?" Yes; she could make puddings, and pies, and soups, and sauces, and jams, and jellies, and cakes, and custards, according to the most approved receipts. "Was she punctual at meals?" asks some dyspeptical gentleman. "Were you certain that the dinner would not grow cold, and her husband's temper grew hot, while she finished dressing?" Yes; she was sure as the clock, and ever at her post, ready for its summons. "And was she patient with those who were not punctual,—that harder duty?" asks the nice moralist. In this, too, Amy did not fail. Her cousin Fanny said of her, that "she was the only punctual and careful person she had ever known, that she could tolerate. Unlike these pattern folks," she said, "when another was too late, when another was so unfortunate as to lose anything, Amy never remarked that she never lost anything—she never kept people waiting." She thought it was well to be faithful in her attention to these minor duties, but believed that any degree of boasting would diminish, if not efface their merit.

There is one question that perhaps no one will be impertinent enough to ask, which we

must therefore put ourselves. Was Amy careful, and neat, and attentive, in her personal appearance? Self-respect, regard for others, even her religious sensibilities, all combined to urge upon her mind the importance of this duty. She wished that her dress might please others, for she wished to give pleasure in every thing. The human body, this exquisite instrument of knowledge and happiness, so cunningly, so wonderfully made — should it not be the object of as much care as we bestow upon some of God's lesser gifts? Does it not contain a celestial spirit? Some may call it a fanciful enthusiasm; but Amy felt that since Jesus had consecrated the human form, it should be kept as a holy temple, in which divine excellence had once been enshrined.

We ask pardon of the reader, for giving such a list of Amy's excellences as a wife and a housekeeper; but she was too modest to speak of them herself, and they could be known fully only to intimate friends and daily visitors.

Edward had much improved during his absence. His character was more firm, more decided. There was an open-hearted pleasantness, a Christian cheerfulness, in his manners,

that gave them an inexpressible charm. He was so trustful, so frank, so spiritual, so purely happy, that he seemed to animate every one, even the dullest, that he approached. All seemed sunshine, where he was. His business was prosperous; he made some very successful speculations, and again called himself a rich man. Amy was rejoiced at again having money at her command. She fully appreciated the pleasure which all the refined luxuries of life afford; more especially that purest of all luxuries, of always having her purse well supplied for the needy. Mr. Weston, too, had never been so truly happy. The coldest and the most worldly heart cannot but yield, at last, to the gentle but all-subduing influences of a constant stream of Christian love. His opinions were not changed; his views of happiness could not become elevated; his intellectual and moral eye was too dim to see the true glory, the true beauty of existence; but his heart was softened and improved by the healthful moral atmosphere which pervaded Amy's and Edward's household.

"I observe, my dear," he said to Amy, "that some of our old friends, among the first class, who forgot us during our fallen fortunes,

have again found us out, since Edward has grown rich. It is well enough to have a visiting acquaintance with people of their standing in society ; but I can never take as much pleasure in them as I did formerly."

Had Edward and Amy no faults ? Were all their days a bright succession of halcyon hours — all success, all goodness, all love ? No ; there is no truth in such pictures. Offences must and do come ; temptations are around and within us. There is no point in the scale of Christian perfection, however high, which does not present new and real, though different and more refined, trials. Married life, as an offset to its higher and more exquisite pleasures, does not lessen, but increase these dangers. The mistakes and misunderstandings of every day call forth virtues, and tempt to faults, the importance of which should not be judged of in comparison with grosser neglects of duty, but according to the higher moral attainments of those who commit them. Nothing has been said of Amy's faults ; the following incident shows of what nature they were.

"Amy," said her husband, one day, "where did you put my journal of my voyage to Canton ?"

"I returned it to you."

"No; I think not; you said you wished to look at it again."

"Oh, but I am sure that I returned it to you, Edward."

"I believe that you kept it, Amy."

"I am so habitually careful about such things that I know I should not have kept it, and then have forgotten it."

"I still think, my dear, that it is in your possession."

"I should think, Edward, that when I assert a thing so positively, you would be satisfied that I am right. You know that you often forget such sort of things; but I never do."

"Valuable papers, Amy, I am never careless of."

"Yes you are, Edward, for here is an instance of it."

"I am not convinced," said her husband.

"I should think you would sooner trust me than yourself in this case; I never make a mistake of this kind."

"If I did not recollect distinctly your keeping the journal I probably should."

"It really is wrong in you to doubt me now. I am perfectly certain that I did not

keep it. I am sure of myself upon such subjects."

Amy's color rose with her positiveness. Her husband's gentleness did not fail, however. He asked her to go and look in the place where she kept her own papers.

"I will go," she said, "to satisfy you, but solely on that account. I am perfectly certain I am right."

She ran up to her room with a quick elated step. She opened the drawer in which her own papers were, and there the first thing was her husband's journal. Sudden shame seemed to spread all over her like a hot garment. "How absurd I must seem to my husband! how can I carry it down to him after my foolish assertions? But he will not triumph over me, he will only be sorry for my fault, he will even be generous enough to be sorry for my mortification, he is so kind; and I do deserve a punishment for my positiveness."

Amy took the manuscript to her husband, and with a quiet manner said, as she gave it to him, "I have been all wrong, and you have been all right, Edward. If I had not found the journal I should have still been as wrong; for I was so foolishly positive. This is

a great fault of mine, I am truly ashamed of it."

Edward silently pressed her hand and the incident was never spoken of again.

" You must not, dear Amy," said Edward, " rest your hopes of happiness with me, upon the faith that I have not many faults."

" Surely not," said Amy ; " and rely upon it I shall be complaisant enough to keep you fully in countenance. You have already seen that I am often too positive ; and perhaps you have to learn another great fault of mine."

" What is it, Amy ? "

" I am very sensitive to blame."

" I should not have thought so ; did you not voluntarily incur the censure of many worldly-minded people by coming to see me on Hospital Island ? "

" Yes, and for such censure I care nothing ; but I find it very hard to keep my temper when those I love blame me."

" It is right that we should value the opinion of those we love, Amy."

" Oh ! but I am too apt to think that those I love ought not to blame me, ought not to doubt me in any thing. I am silly enough to suppose that they cannot think I am wrong."

"I shall often try you, then; I am so hasty and sensitive to any appearance of wrong in any one I love. I am often unreasonable."

"But our happiness," said Amy, "cannot be in danger if we are only fearless and open in confessing our own, and reproving each other's faults."

"We not only," said Edward, "must have no disguises about things of acknowledged importance, but we must consider nothing as trifling in which the happiness of either of us is in question; we must be perfectly open."

All who saw Edward and Amy together perceived that the evil spirit of fear which so often mars the happiness of married life, had no place between them, but that the "spirit of love and a sound mind" presided over and blessed them.

"There is one fault," said Edward, "which very intimate friends are apt to fall into, which I hope we shall avoid."

"What is that?" replied Amy.

"It is bad manners towards each other."

"But how is that possible, Edward? you surely would not like such company politeness as Mrs. Lovell has towards her husband?"

"No, it is not the form, but the spirit and soul of good manners, that I hope we shall never neglect."

"But, loving each other as we do, how is it possible we should be wanting in good manners?"

"It would seem so, Amy; and yet I have often seen people who really loved each other neglectful of the delicate attentions and courtesies of life, on the plea that their intimate friends were sure of their affection, and it was not necessary to be so scrupulous about such little things with friends."

"I think it very vulgar," replied Amy. "How can they be willing to check the spring of little affections which sweeten the cup of life as we drink it."

"It is nevertheless true, Amy; and I have seen your intimate friends commit this fault towards you; I have seen them lavish their attentions and agreeableness upon strangers, and neglect you, because they thought that they were sure of your love."

"I have never noticed it," said Amy.

"I have," replied Edward; "and I have seen the same thing between married people, and I am certain it is a deep injury to any friendship. All our virtues, all our purest

affections require watchfulness ; they must be cultivated, and cherished."

Thus in the simplicity, and truth, and joy of Christian love, did Edward and Amy walk hand in hand, and heart in heart, along the happy way before them. Wealth was a real blessing to them, for they understood its true uses ; life was a real blessing to them, for they kept in view its infinite purposes ; love was a real blessing to them, for they were acquainted with its infinite joys.

CHAPTER XIV.

" His purpose is not to *appear* just, but to *be*."

AESCHYLUS.

MANY months had passed away, each one leaving Edward and Amy happier than it found them. It was a winter evening ; Mr. Weston had retired for the night, visitors were gone, and Edward had been sitting for some time, perfectly silent, looking into the fire.

" What makes you so unusually silent, Edward ? " said his wife.

" I can hardly tell : have I been very silent ? "

" Why you have not spoken for an hour."

" It is a very bad night for the poor," said Edward ; " the cold is extreme."

" Yes," said Amy, " are you not glad that we sent poor Mrs. Brown some wood this morning ? "

Edward made no answer. " Shall I read

you a letter I received this morning from Fanny Roberts ; she and her husband are, I fear, very unhappy."

Edward's attention seemed awakened, and Amy read him Fanny's letter.

Dear Amy,

This is my little Willy's birth-day. The day of her son's birth ought to be a mother's holiday. Alas ! there is no holiday in our house, none in my heart. Three years ago when the first sound of my child's voice fell on my ear, it seemed to me like a voice from Heaven, pronouncing a blessing upon me. Now I look upon the little fellow with pity. I pity him, for, like his mother, he thirsts for happiness, and I fear he will not find it. I pity him, for he craves affection and he shall never be satisfied. I pity him, for he loves his mother, and she does not deserve his love ; he leans upon her, and she is a broken reed. His father came and took him in his arms this morning, and pressed him to his heart with such an indescribable tenderness ; and I saw him look up, and I saw tears, yes, tears in his eyes, but not one word did he speak. It seemed to me as if he purposely looked away from me, as if he wished to forget that

there was such a being in the world. For one moment I was tempted to throw myself on my knees and implore him to cast away his chilling, his cruel reserve, but the nurse-maid was in the room, and I did not wish to proclaim to the world that my husband did not love me. Yes, this is the hateful truth, Amy ; my husband does not love me, and yet I am his wife. Good God, I am his lawful wedded wife, and he does not love me better than all the world beside ; and I have written it calmly as you see, and I am alive, and I have not dashed my head against the wall ; but I am bearing this quietly, bravely, pretending not to see it, not to know it, turning myself into stone ; putting on the mask of hypocrisy, making believe happy, playing as I did when I was a little girl that I am a rich, fine, gay lady, — ha ! ha ! how nicely I cheat them all. I tell you, Amy, because if my heart that sometimes comes near bursting should actually break, (such things have been,) you may bear witness that I had one.

Sweet Willy ! he has just come softly up to me and kissed my hand, and says, " Your hand is cold, mother, leave off and dance and sing with me." What shall I sing ? " There was a maid in Bedlam ? " That is a sad

song ; oh, no, it is not so very sad, for "she knew that her love loved her." Do n't think I am crazy, Amy, I am as rational as ever I was. I try to amuse myself, and get rid of my uncomfortable feelings. For a while I enjoyed dancing, and went to every dance to which I was invited ; but, as my husband gave up going, I did not like it. I shrink from attentions from gentlemen when he is not present.

But I have lately found an amusement that takes up my thoughts safely. It is the game of whist. I have become quite an adept at it. I belong to a party which we joined some time ago. There is a fusty old bachelor who is my regular opponent, and I have never played with him without beating him. I laugh at him unmercifully about it ; I tease him in every way I can devise, just for the sport of seeing the contest between his politeness and his rage. I always have the cards against him ; so sure as he comes out with an ace and king, I trump him ; and if he has four trumps, I have five. The other night, when he thought he was sure of one trick, and I trumped it, rage conquered, and he exclaimed, "The deuse must help Mrs. Roberts ; but I ask pardon — it is your play, ma'am."

"Of whom did you ask pardon, Mr. Bruin, of me or of that respectable person whose name ought not to be so hastily spoken?" Upon this he threw down his cards, and said either of us were welcome to his cards. I laughed heartily at him, and proposed giving him five the next game, which he took up with ; and it did seem as if there was some witchery in the business, for we beat him in one hand. "Thanks to the five we gave you, Mr. Bruin," I said, "or you would have been beaten a love game." "Thank my stars," he said, "I am free of all love games ; one is sure to lose in them."

"Where one is so sure of being beaten, it is most prudent, Mr. Bruin, not to play. I advise you to bring your knitting-work the next time you come, and perhaps you will be kind enough to sit behind me, and advise me how to play my cards." Some one told me that after I left the room, he put his arms a-kimbo, and said, as he looked after me, "Well, I had rather bean old bachelor to the end of time, than have to tame such a shrew as that."

But, ah ! the loneliness, the unspeakable loneliness I feel, after I return from an evening passed in this way, to my own home. My

child is asleep, my husband has retired for the night ; no one is up but the housekeeper, who tries to tread softly for fear of disturbing old Mr. Roberts, whose days draw very fast to a close. Parrot-like in every thing, she always asks me exactly the same question which is, "Do you wish for anything ?" and when I answer, "No," retires. Once, however, she proved her humanity by saying something else. To her question instead of saying, "No," I answered "Yes." "What ma'am ?" she replied. "To die," I answered, and with a tone that was frightful even to my own ears. Instead of leaving me she looked at me kindly ; yes, Amy, kindly, if you will believe it, and said to me, "Life is the gift of a good God, and not to be despised, or wickedly thrown away ; but perhaps, dear, you are ill ; let me take care of you." Had the marble image of Minerva that stood by her in the entry, spoken words of wisdom to me, and extended arms of love and pity towards me, I should not have been more surprised, more moved. I burst into tears. "Oh no ! no !" I said, "I am only heart sick ;" and hurried to my chamber ; but I will never laugh at her again. There is some terrible thing on my husband's mind ; and I, who should be his

bosom friend, know nothing of it ; and oh ! I dare not ask him, he is so cold, so silent, so reserved. Amy ! dear Amy ! I am so lost, so bewildered, so unhappy ! Oh, if I could but see you ! my head is so confused, and my heart is so very heavy. Write to me ! Oh, if you could but come to me ! You know how I love you.

FANNY ROBERTS.

Edward and Amy were both deeply moved at reading Fanny's letter. "We are their nearest and dearest friends," said Amy ; "I wish we could go to them; we might do them good. Poor Fanny ! how my heart aches for her."

"So does mine, Amy ; but you know that it is out of the question for you to go at present. You must write to Fanny, and tell her that the self-sacrificing life of a mother has already commenced with you, and that if all is well, we will certainly come to New York in the spring." Edward again relapsed into an unusual silence.

"Dear Edward !" said his wife, "you have something on your mind ; your brow looks troubled ; what is it.

"Only anxiety about business, Amy. How

often I have wished that I had not been bred a merchant! But my mother said that it was a favorite wish of my father, that I should be an accomplished merchant."

"I have sometimes wished so too," answered his wife; "and then, again, I remember, that the very evils that belong to your profession may be turned into good. He that has it in his power to do wrong with impunity though he gains by it, yet chooses the right by which he loses, is the most eloquent preacher of righteousness."

"Very true, Amy; but sometimes this is indeed cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye; and then thinking always about money and bargains has such a contracting influence upon one's mind!"

"But, how often, Edward, have I heard you say that no man has such wide and various connexions with the human race, as a well-educated, upright, and active merchant! Every part of the world sends him its tribute of knowledge, as well as of riches. He sees men under all aspects; and while he may, with a certain degree of security, indulge in dishonesty, and be the enemy of his fellow-men, perhaps no man can be so true, and self-sacrificing, and efficient a philanthropist, as a Christian merchant."

"It is not always so easy as you may imagine, for a merchant to act as remembering that he is under his great Task-master's eye."

"Not for all, or some men ; but for you, Edward, the difficulty would be to act otherwise. When I think of your profession, Edward, it gives me pleasure to notice that merchants in general, as they acquire property more easily, are more disposed to spend it liberally."

"Yes," said Edward, as his eye kindled at the thought ; "the greater proportion of our public benefactors have been merchants. Their money has given eyes to the blind, and ears to the deaf, health to the sick, and peace and comfort to the forsaken ; it feeds and instructs the ignorant poor ; it sends the glad tidings of salvation to the unbeliever and the penitent ; it takes little children in its arms, and blesses them. But all this glorious power supposes wealth, Amy."

"And you, dear Edward, are rich enough to enjoy this highest of all privileges — to be the dispenser of good to others. You have cause only for thankfulness. But the poor, the unsuccessful merchant, who has not the means of educating his children, whose

spirits are broken down by failures, and whose temper is soured by what he considers the injustice or dishonesty of others, perhaps even of his own friends — he is the man who, perhaps, may be excused for finding fault with his profession. My heart aches for him.”

Edward started up, and walked hastily backward and forwards through the room, as if he had been seized with some sudden and intolerable pain.

“What is the matter, Edward?” said his wife. “Are you ill?”

“O, nothing; nothing of consequence,” said Edward. “I happened to think of something rather unpleasant then. It is late now, I believe, and my head aches.”

They retired for the night. The next day, Edward looked depressed and thoughtful, and as if he had passed a sleepless night. Amy was troubled by his silence. This was the first cloud that had rested on her husband’s brow since they were married.

“He has,” she said to herself, “he has always confided every thing to me. He will tell me what it is that hangs so heavily upon his spirits. He will never shut me out from his sorrows, any more than his joys.”

She thought, when he returned from the counting-house for the day, that he looked more free and happy, though he was still silent and thoughtful.

"Come and sit by me, Amy," said Edward to her, when they were alone in the evening.

Amy sat down by her husband.

"Do you not, Amy, enjoy our handsome house, and pictures, and carriage, &c.?"

"Surely, Edward; I take great pleasure in these things. Why do you ask?"

"And you love to have money enough to give to those who want it?"

"Why, what a question, Edward! You know I value this power more than I can tell."

"And can you voluntarily resign all these luxuries, Amy?"

"Why should I voluntarily resign them, Edward? What makes you so enigmatical? Tell me what you mean."

"Suppose that all the money, which enables us to indulge ourselves in these luxuries, is not truly our own; what would you have me do, Amy?"

"Is it you, Edward, that asks me whether I would keep that which belongs to another? Is it you that asks me whether I would be dishonest?"

"But suppose, according to the law of the land, and the customs of society, and the tacit consent of those most interested, this property was secured to you?"

"When I am satisfied," said Amy, "that I can plead the law of the land, the customs of society, and the opinions of the world, before the judgment-seat of God, as an excuse for violating that higher law, which he has written on my heart — when I have placed the opinion of the world in the scales against my own self-respect, and found it the weightiest, then, Edward, I might hesitate. But why ask me such questions? Why do you not speak plainly?"

"I will, Amy," answered her husband. "When I failed in business, before our marriage, I made a settlement with my creditors, by which I paid them seventy-five cents on a dollar. They knew that I paid them all I had, and signed a full release from all further claims. Of late, my mind has been troubled about those debts; for such I consider them. A few days since, one of my creditors brought his son to me, (a fine fellow,) and asked me to take him into my store. He mentioned, in the course of conversation, that he had intended to send his son to college, for the

boy had a thirst for learning ; that he was, in fact, fitted to enter ; but that he found he was too poor. ‘If,’ said the father, ‘by denying myself every thing but the necessaries of life, I could feed my boy’s mind, I would thankfully do it ; but I cannot honestly indulge myself even in this luxury.’ I felt smitten to the heart. When I failed, I owed that man twelve thousand dollars. I paid him but nine. I now, of course, owe him three, and the interest upon it. That sum would enable him to give his son the advantage which he so much desires. I have been thinking over the whole subject, and studying it fairly. Dymond’s Essay would satisfy me, if I were not convinced before, of what is right.”

“And you will of course do it, Edward ; there can be no doubt.”

“I knew that you would say so, Amy ; but you must think it over calmly. You know, upon the subject of property, as well as other things, we have no mine and thine ; as we have one interest and duty, so we have equal rights. I cannot take this step without your full approbation and consent.”

“Is that all that has troubled you for these few days past ?” said Amy, as she looked

into her husband's face, with an expression of joyful relief.

"All," said Edward.

"And why not speak to me at first about it? Why not let me share every trouble as it rises?"

"O, Amy, I felt it only on your account. I hated to deprive you of all these luxuries. You know with what delight I see you doing good, real good, with money."

"Never again, Edward, do me the injustice to suppose that I prefer the lower virtue of charity to the higher one of justice. Let me not be acknowledged as your equal only in the cheap and easy duties and pleasures of life, but trust in me, as your worthy helpmate, in the higher and more arduous exercises of virtue. I love all the refined pleasures which wealth can give; I enjoy, highly enjoy, all these luxuries, with which we are surrounded; but, Edward, what are they, compared with the unspeakable thrill of joy, with which the noble soul can cast them all aside, as the slight, the paltry purchase money of an infinite satisfaction of this never-silent monitor within? You did not doubt me, surely, Edward?"

"No, dear Amy," said Edward, "I did not;

I never could doubt you. I ought to have spoken to you every thought as it arose in my mind. As soon as my moral sense was awakened to my duty, I ought to have opened my heart to you. But it is so painful to me, not to be able to give you every thing that you can desire, and you seemed so perfectly happy!"

"It is simply a choice between pleasures, Edward; and, as we cannot have all, we will choose the highest and most enduring. Think of the happiness that you can give to others, by this simple act of justice!"

"There is your father, too, Amy. The thought of him has been, perhaps, the greatest pain to me; for I knew you would feel justly; but his free consent to our marriage was founded upon the belief that I was rich; and when he hears of our determination, it will seem to him like mere folly and childishness. It will give him unmixed pain. I am grieved for him."

"So am I," said Amy. "He can enjoy none of the pleasure of this sacrifice. He will even think we do wrong. It is the only real evil belonging to the case. I am sorry, very sorry, for him. But we must bear that too; and we will bear it all bravely, Edward.

What is it, after all, but relinquishing what we have no right to—what, in fact, we have enjoyed at the expense of the rights and happiness of others? And the sooner we make restitution, the happier we shall be ourselves."

CHAPTER XV.

“The noble heart that harbors virtuous thoughts
And labors with a glorious, great intent
Can never rest until it forth have brought
The eternal brood of glory excellent.”

Fairy Queen.

THE next day Edward devoted himself to the examination of the papers relative to his failure ; to ascertaining the number of his creditors, and the amount which, according to his views of duty, he justly owed them. Principal and interest to the last farthing he determined to pay, he said to Amy as he left her in the morning for his counting-room.
“As I cannot help you there,” said his wife,
“I will do my part at home, which is to tell my father of your resolution.”

“Poor Amy, you have far the worst task of the two ; my heart is lighter and happier than it has been since I first viewed this subject rightly ; but yours aches, I know, at giving pain to your father.”

"It is but right," said Amy, "that I should have my share of the suffering that belongs to this duty."

She immediately went to her father's apartment. It had been a great pleasure to her and her husband to devote their most beautiful room to her father's particular use, and it gave her a pang as she entered it, to think that they probably would have to change their place of abode, and that he would then be deprived of this, one of his very few sources of gratification.

Amy sat awhile in her father's room talking with him upon indifferent subjects, before she could gather sufficient courage to speak of the one on her mind, when Mr. Weston introduced a subject which naturally led to it. "I have done with this book, Amy; I took it up from the breakfast table a day or two since, but I see from what little I have read of it that I should not relish it."

"What do you object to in it, father?"

"What he says upon the subject of a bankrupt's paying his debts after he has settled with his creditors, is in some respects arrant nonsense."

"That happens to be the very subject, father, I came to talk about with you."

"My mind has been always made up upon this subject. A man ought to pay all he has, and then if his creditors consent, he is free entirely afterwards."

"If, father, he grows rich again, and is able to pay, it seems to me he ought to pay them."

"Many men of the first standing in society think very differently, and act otherwise, not only in their own case, but in relation to others."

"Edward and I cannot agree with them ; and he thinks now that he is able to pay his creditors all that he owes them, that he ought to do it."

"I trust that he will not be so absurd, so unjust to his own family ; he has no right to treat you so."

I have urged him to this step, father ; and he really means to take it."

"What !" said her father, stamping on the floor, "he will not dare to reduce himself and his wife, and all of us, to comparative poverty, for the sake of gratifying a romantic whim of his and yours."

"The truth is, father, he does not dare to do otherwise ; the property is not ours, it belongs to others."

"I did hope," said Mr. Weston, "now that

I am an old man, I might be allowed to pass the remainder of my days in peace. I suppose you call this goodness, this sickly sensibility, this childish romance ; you have no regard for me or my opinions ; I am weary of life. I wish, that respect for your old father was among your virtues, but that is an old-fashioned duty."

" We are very sorry, father, if you disapprove of our conduct ; but we cannot keep this money and be contented. We shall have enough left to make us very comfortable, and it will be our first object to make you happy in every way we can. You need make no change in your mode of life, except perhaps going with us to a smaller house."

" I had better go to a boarding-house, or a mad-house, or the grave-yard. I did hope now that Edward was prosperous, and the world smiled upon us, I had done with changes."

" I am very sorry, father, that you should suffer."

" Have not," continued Mr. Weston, " have not the wisest and best in the land been placed exactly in Edward's situation ; and have not they considered it perfectly right, to abide by the decision of their creditors

releasing them from all further obligation to pay?"

"There is no decision, father, that can supersede that of one's own conscience; the consciences of the wisest and best men in the world cannot protect ours from pain. We must do what we think right ourselves."

"The opinion which I hold has been an acknowledged principle from time immemorial. There can be no such thing as trade without it; these new-fangled notions are spoiling everything. Does Edward suppose that he is so much wiser, or that he need be so much better than all the rest of the world?"

"He does not wish to judge others; but when he saw a poor man the other day suffering for the want of money which he remembered he owed him, his conscience told him he ought to pay it; and if he ought to pay one creditor, he ought to pay all."

Amy then told her father of the boy who was obliged to give up going to college.

"One of the good effects of the system," said Mr. Weston, "it would prevent many boobies going to college if there were fewer men able to send their sons. When property is accumulated in the hands of a few well-

educated upright men, it is far better for the country. It increases their influence and enables them to do good. They can always assist and patronize real merit ; these things settle themselves."

"But is it not better for a man, as well as more agreeable, to receive justice than charity, father ? We consider this simple justice."

"All of these notions," said Mr. Weston, "come of the romantic ideas of perfectibility, which you so early acquired, Amy, and which have at last been our ruin ; for among other innovations of modern times, women govern their husbands instead of submitting to them according to the directions of St. Paul ; and I believe that this is your notion, and your doings. A man would have had more common sense."

Amy denied this charge, and told her father the truth, that it was Edward's own proposal.

"Then, Amy, it was your duty as a wife to have urged your husband to abide by the opinion of the world."

Amy forbore to remind her father of the objections he had just made to women influencing their husbands ; but simply remarked that she had always thought that no law and no opinion could absolve a man to his own

conscience from paying a just debt, if he had the means; and that, though this was her husband's own proposition altogether, yet she had said every thing to encourage him in it: he had actually commenced making a restitution to his creditors; and that she agreed with him, that this was a sacred obligation of duty.

"And I consider it," said Mr. Weston, "romantic nonsense—absurd sentimentality. But my opinion, my wishes, my rights, my feelings, are set aside, as well as those of all the rest of the world. Mr. Selmar had no right to sacrifice my comfort, and that of his wife and child, perhaps even to starve them, to gratify his quixotic notions of duty. It is a pity he ever undertook to be a merchant. He is only fit to sit by some muddy stream in the country, and make verses to the moon. Such men should never marry. I am sick at my soul of such childish stuff!"

Amy had never seen her father more vexed —more inaccessible to reason. She said all she could to comfort him; but her words were like water spilled on the ground. He concluded the conversation by saying, "I don't wish to hear another word upon the subject. I consider this act as silly as it is

atrocious. But my opinion, and the opinion of every body of common sense, is of no avail. I suppose we are behind the age. That's the cant expression, I believe. The wise and the experienced people of the world must sit still and listen, while boys teach them morals, and women instruct them in political economy. Children, now-a-days, teach their parents, and turn their grandfathers out of doors. Every man over sixty must wish himself in his quiet grave, unless he turns fool with the rest of the world."

Mr. Weston drew his chair towards the fire, put up his feet on the fender, adjusted his spectacles, and took up his book; and Amy was obliged, with a heavy heart, to leave him with the flush of anger still glowing on his hollow cheek.

Edward and Amy bent their whole attention to the performance of the duties which their determination imposed upon them. Cheerfully and promptly they made arrangements for the change in their style of living, which their lessened income would render necessary.

"I have paid the last farthing, principal and interest!" exclaimed Edward, as he returned from his counting-room, his face

glowing with delight. "I stand now free of all bonds, like a man escaped from slavery — disenthralled — truly free, with a joyful sense of power, such as I never before experienced. O, I did not think that money, simply, too, the restitution of money that was not my own, could have given me such pleasure. One pleasure I enjoyed quite accidentally. The father of the boy that wished so much to go to college, asked me to call in some evening, and see his wife, with whom I was formerly acquainted. I called in as I came home this evening. I had been there only a minute, when a beautiful, noble-looking boy burst into the room, and ran up to his mother, and, putting his arms around her neck, whispered, loud enough for all in the room to hear, 'Mother, father has just told me that I can go to college, and I shall not have to part with my books, and I shall not have to make bargains, and be a merchant. Good Mr. Selmar has paid father some money.' As soon as his mother could make him listen, she mentioned my name to him. His face was all radiant with bashful surprise and pleasure. He came up to me, and gave me both his hands, and looked up at me as if I had bestowed a great gift upon him, instead of merely paying a just debt."

"I have heard of another case, dear Edward. You know Sophia Reed; her parents had just consented to her going to Ohio as a governess, because they could not afford to support all their children at home. Ruth (whose sister lives there) has been giving me an account of the joy of the family, since you paid them what you owed them. She says it was as if she had been dead, and had been brought to life again."

The charms of generosity, the attractive loveliness of compassion, the healing and quickening influences of charity, have often and justly been set forth. They have been recommended by all the graces and winning arts of human eloquence. But, should simple and even-handed justice but govern our land for one day, not bestowing aught as a favor, but restoring to each human being that which is rightfully and truly his own, what pen could record all the touching tales of relief from misery — what ear, but that of the all-merciful God, could bear the full swell of blissful gratitude, which would rise from the millions of human hearts, suffering and dying from defrauded rights, and reckless, ruthless injustice? So thought Edward and Amy; and never had they enjoyed so pure a pleas-

ure from the possession of money, as the performance of this simple, equitable act had given them. There were many who laughed at them; others who blamed them; others who pitied them; and others, again, who highly praised them. Mrs. Lovell, who never failed to visit her acquaintances upon great occasions, called, soon after, to condole or congratulate them, as she found most appropriate.

"I cannot but lament, my dear," said she to Amy, "the necessity of your leaving this elegant house, and giving up your carriage."

"But for my father, I should not regret it," said Amy. "As soon as we were convinced that we had no right to the house and carriage, we could not enjoy them. Honest poverty is, in our opinion, a happier as well as more dignified state than even questionable riches. So don't lament on our account."

"But it is so noble in you both! The opinion of the world would entirely bear you out, in keeping this property that Mr. Selmar and you have relinquished."

"The opinion of the world," replied Amy, "could not also make us happy in doing it. Mr. Selmar and I both regret that we did not sooner see our duty. It is now nearly a year

since he has had it in his power to pay these just debts; and we feel rather humble, on that account."

"But Mr. Selmar must suffer much from depriving you of all these luxuries."

"He will never, I trust, be so unkind as to separate me, in his thoughts, from himself, or to doubt whether I can bear as cheerfully as he whatever sacrifice duty requires."

Just then, a domestic entered, and gave Amy a note.

"Excuse me, if you please," she said to Mrs. L., "while I open this letter to my husband, and see if it should be sent to him."

When Amy had enclosed the letter to her husband, and sent it to him, Mrs. Lovell said, with great surprise in her looks, "What! do you venture to open your husband's letters?"

"Surely," said Amy. "Why not?"

"But, suppose that the letter should contain something that Mr. Selmar would not wish you to know?"

"That could not be," replied Amy. "We have one heart, one interest, and, as far as possible, one mind, in every thing. There is no mine and thine between us. Then why not open each other's letters? We always do so, when there is any reason for it."

"I have, my dear, always been scrupulously careful upon this point. I rarely open even a note of invitation ; and to this delicate and watchful respect I owe, I think, much of the unparalleled happiness of my wedded life. Let me warn you, my dear, of the danger of this habit. Few characters can venture to be so transparent. I am better acquainted with men than you are."

Amy made no answer, but simply changed the conversation.

"Shall you part, my dear, with any of your domestics ?" asked Mrs. Lovell.

"Yes ; two — a man and a woman."

"Are they trustworthy, and can you recommend them ?"

"Yes, I can," replied Amy.

"But, do they know their places, and will they be willing to conform to my rules ?"

"I cannot tell that," said Amy, "as I do not know what your rules are ; but they can best decide for themselves. Would you like to speak to them ?"

"Not to-day ; I must think of it first. What wages have you paid them, my dear ? I always give low wages from principle. High wages spoil servants. If they deserve it, I make it up to them in presents ; and it

keeps them more under, and has a good effect upon them, to know that they must win your favor by good conduct, or they will lose by it. I think it is setting a bad example, to give women, especially, high wages."

"My views are different," replied Amy. "I think the wages of women too low; and I always pay them the highest, as a matter of right, if they understand their work, and do it well. I had rather economize some other way."

The other part of Mrs. Lovell's remarks she was too much displeased with to reply to; but she added, "You know, my husband and I are true republicans, even radicals, as I suppose you would call us, and desire the abolition of all disgraceful servitude, and therefore encourage the spirit of independence in our domestics."

"O, my dear," said Mrs. Lovell, "this liberty and independence are excellent in the abstract, and highly desirable for those who are sufficiently enlightened to make a right use of them; but they will never do in practice, particularly with the mass. It is liberty that spoils our servants. It will ruin the country, Mr. L. says."

"We hope better things," said Amy. "We

think that we have not liberty enough yet, and that, when we are consistent republicans, and truly faithful to our institutions, we shall be a truly happy people."

"Mr. Lovell thinks otherwise. He says that the prospects of the country are very gloomy," said Mrs. Lovell, as she took her leave.

When Ruth heard from Amy that Mr. Selmar was going to pay his creditors the remainder of what he owed them, and that, in order to do this, they must move into a smaller house, and reduce their expenses very considerably, her first expression was, "Well, now, if that is n't ridiculous! Just as we have got fixed, to have to move again! Well, they say a rolling stone gathers no moss."

"We shall give up our carriage, and part with Nancy and John, Ruth; but we think we ought to pay this money, though the law does not bind us to it."

"And I'm sure, ma'am, I respect you for it; and you know that no one goes in his own carriage to the grave. It will be all the same thing a hundred years hence, whether one has been rich or poor; but not, I reckon, whether we have done justice to all men, or not; and nobody knows how you and Mr.

Selmar would have borne your prosperity. It's hard to carry a full cup even ; and they say that vinegar is the son of wine. Not that there is much wine-drinking in this house either ; but then you might drink it, if you pleased ; and I dare say it will all be for the best, in the end, that you can't burn the candle at both ends, even if you had money enough to afford to be so wasteful, which, I am sure, would be ridiculous."

CHAPTER XVI.

" If you regard me with this look of ice
My heart shuts up with inward shuddering ;
The stream of tears is checked, cold horror fetters
The words of fond entreaty in my bosom ;
Unchain my heart, that I may move your own."

MARY STUART.

Amy devoted her first leisure moments, after the performance of the duties which their altered mode of life made necessary, to answering Fanny's letter. She conjured her to open her heart to her husband ; she entreated her to tell him of all she suffered from his reserve. She used every argument she could think of, to prove to her that the happiness of her whole life depended upon her conduct now, and that she must, at any cost, insist upon her husband's confidence. She referred Fanny to her former letters, in which she warned her against the danger that was sure to arise from any want of truth and trustful open-hearted dealings between her and her husband, and entreated her now

while it was yet possible to recover her husband's confidence, to be simple, and upright with him. She warned her against the hardening influence of the endeavor to make what is called pleasure, take the place of a true and virtuous happiness. She expressed her firm conviction that her husband still loved her, but probably doubted whether she loved him.

She promised Fanny to visit her in the spring, if she should be carried safely through her approaching confinement. She expressed to her the deep unutterable joy which she felt at the hope of being a mother. "Surely," she said, "God himself strengthens and cheers the heart of the hopeful mother, who peacefully and courageously waits her appointed time."

She mentioned the fact that Edward had paid what remained due of his debts, and that they in consequence were obliged to move to another house and lessen their expenditure. She simply expressed her regret that they had not before remembered that this was a duty; and her great pleasure that they had it in their power to make just restitution of what did not in fact belong to them, and

from the loss of which the rightful owners had so long unjustly suffered.

Fanny's letters to Amy had given a faithful picture of her own state of mind, and as far as could be judged of by appearances, that of her husband's ; but in order that the reader may be able to understand this perfectly, some circumstances and facts must be related. Mr. Roberts' father had become more and more infirm and childish ; he was unwilling to have his son out of his sight, his life seemed to depend upon his presence ; no one, not even his favorite housekeeper could take his place, he thought, for a moment. The silence which Fanny complained of, increased upon him ; he was gentle and kind in his manner towards his wife, but it seemed to be the kindness of pity, not of love. In this state of feeling, an occurrence apparently trifling took place, the effects of which on his mind threatened to fix his and Fanny's destiny for misery in their present connexion. In Fanny's letter to Amy it may be remembered she had mentioned the whist party she had joined, which she preferred to all other amusements, because she was unwilling to go among strangers unattended by her husband. The established rule in this little circle was, that

they should meet alternately at each other's houses ; but hitherto when it came to Fanny's turn, the next person on the list had proposed that she should be excused on account of the illness of old Mr. Roberts. As, however, there was no important change in his state of health, and no immediate cause of alarm, it seemed to be now expected that Fanny and her husband should have the party at their house. Fanny looked embarrassed when the question arose where they should next meet. One of the company remarked that it was Mrs. Roberts' turn ; "and then," said another "we shall perhaps have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Roberts." "Perhaps," said a third "Mr. Roberts is too wise and good to spend his time in such a useless manner." The lady who had kindly taken the party before, when it was Fanny's turn, added, "Mrs. Roberts shall not be forced to give her reasons for not having us at her house ; my doors shall gladly be opened." Fanny was vexed, and hardly knowing what she said, invited the party to meet at her house the next week ; and then turning to Mr. Bruin, who was not a regular member of the club, but who had been usually invited from particular courtesy, she said, "I hope we shall

have the pleasure of seeing you, Mr. Bruin, unless you are afraid of being beaten unmercifully." The good man considered this a proposal of peace, and offered to wait upon Fanny home, which she refused. When seated alone in her carriage, Fanny's feelings were not to be envied. "What have I done?" said she to herself; "invited the whist party to our house when my husband's father is so ill that he will not leave his bed-side even to spend an evening with his wife! Can it be right, then, that I should leave home to join the party elsewhere? Was it right in him to urge me to go, and almost insist upon it? I will tell him that if it be only for the sake of appearances, and to silence the evil sayings of the world, I will go out no longer without him."

Mr. Roberts watched with his father that night. When Fanny met him in the morning her first impulse after inquiring about his father's state, was to tell him how painful it was to her to go to these whist parties without him, and to explain the feelings which had induced her to invite the whole company to their house, and then to propose an entire withdrawal from the circle, on the ground of his father's illness, and the impos-

sibility of his going with her. But there was something in the solemn rigid coldness of his manner, that seemed to freeze up all Fanny's good purposes, and awake the slumbering evil spirit in her heart.

"It seems to me, Mr. Roberts," she said in an affected tone of pleasantry, "that, as Mr. Weston says, the opinion of the world will hardly bear us out in these fashionable manners."

"What do you mean, Fanny?" he replied, in a solemn tone.

"Why," said she, "the wisest and best, I think, would not approve of my going to card parties and leaving you at home to nurse your father, and take care of the house and the baby. It looks a little as if my home was not happy; it looks as if I was not a good wife, it looks as if you did not hold your proper place in the house. It seems, you know, as if the order of things was inverted, for a woman to go out after pleasure, because home has no attractions: if a man does such a thing, it is all natural enough; but for a woman, forsooth, to commit such an enormity, it will never do, the world will shake their wise heads, and conclude we are not happy."

"Very possible," replied Mr. Roberts, whose gloom was increased by her levity.

"Is it right," said Fanny who could no longer maintain her jesting tone, "for you to insist upon my going to these whist parties without you?"

"I thought it would give you pleasure."

"We have never had the party here," said Fanny, "and it must appear while I go to them, as if you did not approve of it, for you have never gone since the first two or three meetings, and I am exposed to very unpleasant remarks. It is our turn to receive the party next week, and—" Fanny hesitated ; her heart told her all was wrong within : while she was thinking how to proceed, her husband said, "Invite them here next Monday, Fanny ; I see that your not meeting here does expose you to unpleasant remarks. Have them here, I beg of you ; indeed I insist upon it ; my father may be better, and I will try to be with you ; I am sorry I have not thought of this myself."

There was a momentary strife between right and wrong in Fanny's heart : she felt she ought to tell her husband that she had already asked them, and explain why ; but how could she disturb that moment of something like confidence and kindness between them ? She had only to be silent and all seem-

ed nicely arranged, and her difficulties all done away. The temptation was too great for her, she had not the courage to tell him that she had invited the party without consulting him. She continued silent.

"I am glad," said Mr. Roberts, "that you spoke to me freely of this affair, Fanny, and told me all your wishes. Heaven knows I would make you happy, if I could. I am going now to get a breath of fresh air, and then to my father's room again; in the mean while you had better send your invitations to our friends." There was an unusual tenderness in his manner, and Fanny tried to feel happy.

In the course of his walk he met Mr. Bruin; he stopped to shake hands with him. Just as they were parting, Mr. Bruin said to him, "Mrs. Roberts was kind enough to invite me to join the whist party next Monday evening at your house, and I intend to do myself the honor to come."

Poor Roberts could make no reply; he was stupified with misery; all that Fanny had said to him seemed like a premeditated contrivance and falsehood. "She has," he said to himself, "no confidence in me, no love for me; she was unfeeling enough to invite com-

pany to the house when my father is on his death-bed ; and she was then mean enough to hide it from me in this manner, and to contrive that it should seem my wish that they should come. She coqueted with me before marriage ; how can I expect love and truth from her now she is my wife. She married me, perhaps, for an establishment ; I am only a necessary appendage. She was alone in the world ; she had no natural protector ; it was important to her to fasten herself to some one, and I was the most convenient tool she met with ; and now her strongest bond to me is that she has no home to go to." This sorrowful thought, "no home to go to," softened his rising indignation. "Poor young thing !" he continued, as he moved along mechanically through an obscure street that he had entered to avoid observation, "Unhappy Fanny ! She was lonely and dependent, and I was rich and devoted to her ; I was too importunate in the expression of my love for her ; she, perhaps, thought she loved me ; she meant to love me, but love cannot be forced, even our own will cannot bid us love another. I have made her more lonely than she was before, by making her my wife ; I am to her only a

gaoler, for her heart does not welcome the bonds that hold us together. She is not happy ; and yet she was once so gay and happy, and she is so young, so beautiful. Oh that I could make her free even at the sacrifice of my life, if by so doing I might restore her to a life of truth and peace. I will not reproach her with her falsehood ; I will add nothing to her misery ; let her have what pleasure she can from a successful contrivance. Why should she also be unhappy ? not for worlds would I have her heart ache with the agony that mine endures."

Mr. Roberts returned to his house with the determination to say nothing to his wife of his discovery of her want of truth and confidence in him. Fanny was so accustomed to her husband's cold and reserved manners, that she did not notice the deeper gloom that had settled on his brow from this time. The Monday came, and Fanny's friends assembled in her drawing-room, according to her invitation. Mr. Roberts, faithful to his promise, was present to welcome them. As soon as they were seated at the card tables, he went up to his father's room. The evening was nearly past, when, as he was gazing into the fire, lost in a melancholy reverie, he was startled by

Mrs. Hawkins suddenly addressing him with these words,—“Mr. Roberts, do n’t you think Mrs. Roberts expects you down stairs?” He made no answer: she continued, “I thought she looked rather down-hearted about their coming; had n’t you better go down? she ’ll feel better if you do.”

“Perhaps I had,” he said, and he went down to the drawing-room. The room was brilliantly lighted; every countenance, to the melancholy man seemed to beam with a joy in which he had no share, and which he feared his entrance would disturb: more than all, Fanny, his young and lovely wife, who usually when he saw her looked sad and dull, now appeared to him radiant with enjoyment, as well as beauty. As he was gazing at her, she raised her eyes, which before had been fixed on her cards, and as they met his sorrowful look, her face grew crimson red, and in her embarrassment she trumped her partner’s trick.

“Is this the way,” said her partner laughing, “you treat your best friends? Mr. Roberts you have a strange wife; I hope she does not treat you as she does me. I advise you to look after her; she is not to be trusted.”

Mr. Roberts sighed unconsciously: Fanny heard it; that low sigh was louder to her

conscience-stricken ear than all the confused din of gay sounds with which, to another, the room would have seemed full. Fanny tried to rally her spirits, but in vain ; she played worse and worse, and lost the game. It seemed as if the whole company experienced a sudden and unaccountable fall of spirits after Mr. Roberts' entrance : they separated sooner than usual, on the plea that they must keep good hours, as Mr. Roberts' father retired early to rest.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Poor Ophelia!
Divided against herself and her fair judgment.”
HAMLET.

Poor Fanny, who seemed born for gaiety and joy, as truly as the rose is created for beauty and fragrance, was fast withering in the chilling and ungenial atmosphere in which she was placed. As her misery increased, she grew more and more pettish and unreasonable, and, when it was too late, repented of some unjust or passionate expression, which she was guilty of towards her husband, and which he passed over unnoticed, or with a sorrowful rather than upbraiding look. He appeared like a person whose bosom labored with some painful secret, which he could not communicate, and the evil effects of which he would fain suffer alone.

In answer to Amy's letter, Fanny repeated her conviction that her husband did not love her, and her unutterable misery at this belief.

She declared that it was impossible for her to speak freely to him. She related to Amy the whole story of the whist party, in nothing extenuating herself, but, on the contrary, calling herself a monster, and, by that means, trying to relieve her conscience, which blamed her for not acknowledging her small but real fault at first, and her subsequent untruth to her husband.

Upon the subject of the reduced circumstances of her friends, Fanny said, "O that we, too, were poor! — that I had to work for my daily bread, to labor for my sweet Willy! That might please his father, perhaps. If I were to minister to my husband with my own hands, perhaps he would notice me as much as he does his shoe-black. At any rate, bodily labor might divert this terrible pain in my heart. I want to be in motion all the time. I try to run away from myself. I tell the coachman, when I take a drive, to go as fast as he will. 'Where, ma'am?' he asks. 'I don't care,' I answer. He returns in season for dinner, for his own sake. I meet my husband at table. He asks me where I have been. I answer, I do not know; that the coachman can tell him, but that I don't know the names of roads and

places where I go. Perhaps he does not speak again during dinner, unless Mrs. Hawkins makes an effort at conversation ; and then I say something either to make my husband angry, or to make him laugh ; but all in vain. He does not love me enough to be angry with me, and is too unhappy to laugh. I laugh, and make strangers laugh. My head is full of all sorts of vagaries. Every thing takes the horrid form of a savage jest in my mind. Most of all, peace of mind, love, and joy, are jests to me. People call me witty ; but it is all reckless misery. The one thought, that my husband does not love me, presses so on my poor heart ! and O, dear Amy, my head is so dizzy ! Do n't you be angry too, Amy ; if you are, tell me so ; anything I can bear but this terrible silence. If my husband were to speak in a voice of thunder, I should prefer it to this awful silence. Pity me, I am so unhappy.

Yours,

FANNY."

Soon after Fanny had despatched her letter to Amy, her husband entered the room. She felt strangely shocked at the solemn sadness of his manner, far greater, even, than was usual to him. He sat down on the sofa,

by her side, and, after a momentary silence, in which he seemed to be making an effort at self-command, he said, "Fanny, my father is dead. He died about an hour since, very suddenly, without any pain, just after Mrs. Hawkins and I had arranged his pillow for him, and thought he was only falling asleep."

"Dear, happy old man! He is free from all pain," replied Fanny.

"The funeral," continued Mr. Roberts, "will be the day after to-morrow; and then, Fanny, as soon as I have settled the estate, I am going to Europe."

"Going to Europe!" exclaimed his wife, with affected calmness; "and alone?"

"Yes, alone," he replied, with a sad emphasis on the word.

"And what are you going to do with me and Willy?" asked Fanny.

"I wish you to say, Fanny, where you would prefer to be."

"And why is it that you forsake your wife and child?"

"I leave you, Fanny, because I have long been satisfied that we should be happier separated."

"Happy! did you speak of being happy?" screamed Fanny, looking wildly in his face.

"I am sure we are very happy, remarkably happy, especially when we are alone together ; you are so sociable, so talkative, so gay, and you love me so dearly ; and then I am so gentle and good ; why we are like two lovers, dear William, are we not ? Why should we separate ? let us be married again, dear ! The day of the funeral will do, the clergyman you know will be here, and your father will be present, and we will invite the sexton and the grave-diggers, and the pall-bearers, and the mourners, and the bell shall toll ; ah that is just the thing ! "

Fanny burst into a hysterical laugh, and then fell into a long fainting fit. Mr. Roberts rang the bell for assistance, and after he had carried her to her bed-room, left her with Mrs. Hawkins. Some hours afterwards, when she had revived, she sent for her husband : there was a rigid statue-like quietness about her, very unlike her usual appearance.

"I am perfectly composed," said Fanny, in answer to his entreaty that she would be calm. "Do not fear that I shall so lose possession of myself again, I promise to be calm. I have some questions to ask of you, and some affairs of importance to settle. Are you resolved to go to Europe ? "

"Yes, Fanny, I think it would be better for us both; but let us avoid all excitement; it is enough that we cannot be happy together, and therefore part."

"What do you mean to do with our boy?" Fanny nearly lost her self-command as she spoke the word.

"I mean to leave him with you, Fanny?"

"But would you not like to have him yourself? Surely you love that baby; he has never done wrong; do you not love him?" There was a frightful stiffness in her muscles as she asked this question.

"God knows I love him better than life!" answered her husband.

"Then why do you leave him?"

"Because," said Roberts, "I think you have the best right to him. You have endured much for him; a mother's sufferings give her an inalienable right to her child; no law of man, no opinion of the world can abrogate that higher claim. I have as yet done nothing to deserve the name of father; you have endured pain and privation for his sake, and have the highest claim to him."

"That is very generous in you, William." After a short silence, during which she seemed lost in thought, she said, "I know I am

not competent to the charge of Willy. I have, however, thought of a plan which will promote his best good. I know of a person who might take the care of him, who is entirely competent, and who I know Willy would be happy with. I want you to promise to give me your sanction to my choice, and aid me in my plan."

"Surely I will promise to agree to it, if it is a good thing for my child," said Roberts.

"It is, I can solemnly assure you the best provision that can be made for him: only promise; it is the only favor I ask of you."

"But I do not know the person," said her husband.

"You do know the person," said Fanny, "and you do know him to be upright, and generous, and kind, and all that such an one should be; oh promise! do promise, William! it is Fanny, your own Fanny, she whom you once loved so well, who begs, who implores you to make this one promise to her; it is her last, her dying request, for oh my head is so hot it must be consumed ere long!"

"You told me Fanny, you would be calm," said Roberts, greatly alarmed.

"And I will be," she said, with a calm but yet more earnest tone, "if you will only

promise. But oh, promise me to agree to what I propose for Willy! here I remain on my bended knees till you promise ; ” and she actually fell upon her knees before him.

In a state of unspeakable agony of mind Mr. Roberts raised her from the floor, and promised to agree to whatever she should propose. With a strange unearthly expression of joy, Fanny exclaimed, “ Thank God ! I have saved my child ! Let what will become of me, I can bear it now.”

“ What are you going to do with our boy ? ” said her husband ; he feared that she was really insane.

“ I am going,” she said, “ to place him with his only safe and worthy protector, his only truly good friend ; one who will teach him what is right, and walk himself in the way he points out ; one who is just, and kind, and oh, so patient ! One who will never let him know his mother’s faults ; for oh, once he loved her ! it is in *his father’s* hands I put my child, my only earthly treasure. Take him, dear William, take our dear boy ! and keep him, and guard him as the apple of your eye ; watch over him day and night, in the early morning, and in the feverish noon-day. Shelter him in your arms at night, keep him

from the cold ; be mother and father too, to him. If he is sick, let no one sit by him and nurse him but you. Lead him to God. Do all this ! oh, I know you will do all this, and more than this, for our sweet Willy ; and oh, forget and forgive his faulty mother, who could not make you happy."

Fanny said this in such a hurried and vehement manner, that it was in vain that her husband attempted to interrupt her with his protest against taking their child with him. In the midst of his agony of mind at witnessing his wife's sufferings, and his admiration of her magnanimous self-sacrifice, he felt a strange joy thrill through his whole soul.

" Be composed, my dear Fanny ; I cannot take away our boy from you, I never will do this. Do not ask this."

" Oh but you have promised you will, and you must take Willy with you."

" He sha'nt take me from my mother," said the child, who just then ran in, and heard the last words.

" He is your own boy, Fanny, you have the best right to him. If I must go, I will leave our dear child with you."

" But you shall not go, you shall not leave

me," said Willy. "I will stay with father and mother too; let me hug you both together." And with his little but irresistible strength the child pulled his father towards his mother, and lifted up his mother's arm to put it round his and his father's neck; but it dropped lifeless. Mr. Roberts caught his wife, just as she was sinking on the floor.

When Fanny recovered from the heavy swoon she had fallen into, she was seized with violent chills, which were followed by a high fever, and before the physician who was sent for, arrived, her mind began to wander, with all the symptoms of a severe and dangerous illness.

A deeper gloom hung upon the heart of Mr. Roberts on the day of his father's funeral, than that which even the most affectionate son feels when he is called upon to consign to the grave the remains of the being, who has been the author of his earthly existence, the patient, the watchful, the ever-forgiving and loving guardian of his childish and youthful days, the priceless companion and friend of his maturer life. Deep and heartfelt as is this sorrow it is in the order of nature; and the aching heart readily acknowledges the duty of acquiescence. So felt this faithful

and affectionate son. He had a far deeper sorrow to endure ; he feared that the being whom he had taken to his heart with the hope and belief that she would take the place of all other earthly affections to him, that she would be the heart of his heart, and the life of his life, the joy of all his joys, would be taken from him in the sweet morning and blossoming time of her existence.—But had she redeemed the pledge and promise of the beautiful sunny hours of her early days ? Had she been faithful to the spirit of her promise of devoted love ? Had *he* ? Had he faithfully cherished the heart that had committed itself so trustfully, so fondly to his care ?

These last questions came to Roberts' mind with a terrible energy. "But," he said to himself, "she does not love me as I hoped, as I desired to be loved ; she would be happier without me. It is sad, oh terribly sad, to see such a being so formed for enjoyment, so young, with the cup of happiness before her but just tasted, to see her snatched away so suddenly, to see all her young hopes blighted. I hoped that I alone should be sacrificed ; I hoped that when relieved from my presence she might be happy ; but it is I that have killed her."

Such were the agonizing thoughts that passed and re-passed through the mind of the miserable man, as he performed the last duties to his departed parent. When he returned from the dwelling-place of the dead to his own house, a more fearful coldness than he had there felt came upon him as he heard the answer to his inquiry about his wife, from the doctor whom he met at the door. "She is no better; she is still delirious, I think her case a very alarming one."

"Oh that I could die to save her," exclaimed Roberts, as he sat down at his lonely fireside. "Oh that by any suffering, or sacrifice, I might restore her to life!"

"Let us ask our Father in heaven to make mother well," said Willy who had crept into the room, and climbed his father's knees, and put his arms round his neck. "Let us beg him very hard, dear father, and I am sure he will."

His father folded his boy in his arms, and wept with him; and his soul seemed refreshed and strengthened with hope, as he pressed the little fellow to his aching heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ How is’t
That in affliction only we can see
The hand of God leading the good to good,
And ministering, by man himself, to man ? ”

HERMAN AND DOROTHEA.

THE effort that Fanny had made to surrender up her boy to the care of his father, had evidently accelerated the disease which had been for some time preying upon her nervous system. During her delirium, she was continually repeating her directions to his father about the care of Willy. “ Do n’t,” she would cry out, “ let any one frighten my little boy. Willy is a brave boy now. When he is sick, he will cry for his mother ; then don’t be angry with him, but hush him gently ; put your arms around him softly, so ; and sing to him very sweetly, so.” Then she would sing such wild and plaintive notes, that the heart of poor Roberts was like to break. Sometimes she would exclaim, “ Now I have saved my boy. Now

he will be always with his father. Now my husband will pity me. Now God will forgive me, and take me to his care. Have I not bound and laid upon his altar my first-born — my only son? Will no angel provide me with a burnt-offering, to take the place of my heart's treasure? Yet I have not withheld my son — my only son. Will not God pity me now, and let me die? Be very still, that I may hear the angel call to me out of the heavens. He tells me that God has accepted my sacrifice. Yes; his father promised to take him. I have saved my son. Don't let Willy say good-bye to me; I can't hear good-bye from Willy; but let him hug me close, closer, oh! closer still, till he stops this pain in my heart. — One of these days, when it will not make him cry to hear her name, tell him pretty stories about his mother, and sing him the little songs she wrote for him; tell him once she was merry, so merry, more merry than wise. You need not tell him how much she loved him; he never will forget it. Willy knows his mother loves him. But his father does not know so well as his boy does about his Fanny; and he is a grown-up man, and my Willy is a little child, and yet he knows more than his father.

O, Willy, Willy, must I let you go? must I sacrifice this Isaac of my soul?"

Such heart-rending expressions as these was Roberts doomed to hear, from his suffering wife, for three long, agonizing weeks, when, suddenly, after a long and more quiet sleep than she had had for some time, she opened her eyes, and knew her husband, who was sitting by her bed-side, watching her with an intense anxiety in his face.

"Give me a little drink, my dear," she said.

O, had that cup of cold water, which her husband gave her then, purchased for himself eternal life, he would hardly have experienced a greater joy than he felt, when he saw Fanny lift up her bright blue eye calmly to his, and heard the music of her natural voice, as she pronounced his name, and gave signs of recovered reason.

Roberts, who was unaccustomed to severe illness, was alarmed to find that his wife's recovery from the delirium was accompanied by a childlike weakness of mind, as well as body; and, but for his physician, he would have been thrown into utter despair, at hearing her speak of herself and him with a total forgetfulness of all that had passed during

their residence in New York. She thought that she was in Boston, and that her illness was occasioned by her confinement, and was continually asking for the baby, who, she said, must be called Willy. They pacified her by telling her that the doctor thought her too ill to see him. Her husband was the only person she knew.

"Dear William," she said to him, "what a good nurse you are! How sweet it is to have you take care of me! You can see our boy, though they will not let me see him. Who does he look like? It is to be hoped that he will have your nose and my eyes; and if he has your sense, pray let him have my nonsense, or there will be two against one, which is no fair, as the boys say."

It seemed as if her husband's heart would now burst with joy, as it before had been near breaking with hopeless misery. Sometimes he almost felt selfish enough to dread her gaining strength, and recovering her memory, lest she should again lose her love for him.

Gradually, Fanny began to recollect the past. A most careful, skilful, and tender nurse had assisted her husband in taking charge of her during her illness, and still

more critical recovery ; and she seemed much attached and very dependent upon her. About a week after the recovery of her reason, she said to her husband, when the nurse was out of the room, "I have an indistinct recollection of having seen that woman. I remember her gown ; and I cannot tell how it is, but it makes me want to laugh when I look at it ; and I don't like her then. But I never knew such a devoted, tender, excellent nurse. What is her name ? "

Her husband evaded the question.

" It seems to me that I have seen that gown before," said Fanny, with a deep, low emphasis, and a sort of self-questioning tone. " It seems to me, William, as if that woman brought some horrid dream to my mind."

" Remember," said her husband, " that you have been very ill ; and the doctor says that you must be very quiet."

" May I not see my boy to-day ? " said Fanny.

" If the doctor consents, my love, you shall."

" How kind you are to me, William ! " said his wife, kissing his hand, which was holding hers. " You will always love me ; will you not ? "

"So help me God, I will!" replied her husband.

Fanny gained strength so fast, that in a few days the doctor thought her husband might venture, when she asked for her baby, to tell her of the effect of her illness, and let her see her boy.

"Can you be very calm," said Roberts, when she asked for her child, "can you be very calm, and hear what I have to say?"

"Yes," she answered. "I am getting strong so fast, that I can promise even to be quiet."

"You must know," said her husband, "that the fever you have had has destroyed, for the time, your memory. Your boy is three years old, and you think he is only three weeks. We are in New York—not in Boston."

"And why are we here?" said Fanny; "why are we here in New York? O, now I remember I have not seen Amy this long while."

"My father sent for me to come and live with him."

"Did he?" said Fanny, with a vacant and yet troubled look, like that of a person coming to his senses, after being stunned.

"Yes, dear ; he sent for us, and we moved here. And now, if you should like it, you shall see Willy, and kiss him ; and then you must try to sleep."

He was anxious to stop there ; and he took the most effectual method of checking his wife's waking memory, by mentioning her boy.

"Yes, O yes, let me see my child."

The little fellow, carefully obeying his father's directions, came in slowly, on tiptoe, and went up to his mother. She held him back an instant, and looked like one whose eyes are dazzled, as the returning light of a mother's memory shone on the form and face of her child. Poor Willy could bear it no longer.

"Mother ! dear mother ! I love you. Don't you know me ? It's Willy — your own boy," he sobbed out, and nestled his head into her bosom.

Tears, blessed tears, came to the relief of the poor mother, as she pressed the child to her heart. Alas ! around that unutterable joy, as it again took its place in her awakened memory, clustered so many terrible thoughts ! Her husband feared this moment, and had planned various ways of meeting it ;

but they were all defeated, and a better way found out, by the untaught, artless address of a loving child.

"Do not cry any more, mother, now ; get well directly, mother. Father told me this morning that he never, never would leave you, nor me, while he lived. He says if you only get well we will all live together and try to be good and happy ; and I have been wanting to get into your room ever since and tell you of it, for I knew that would make you well."

Thus did the angel hand of her own sweet innocent child suddenly lift up the veil which had so mercifully for her been dropped over the terrible past ; and it seemed as if the darkness and dreariness of the scene were dissipated by the heavenly light that shone from the countenance of the unconscious little being, who had thus rendered of no avail the councils of his elders.

"Is it so, William ? Am I again a wife, and a mother ? Now I remember all."

"It is so," said her husband, "but be still now, say nothing more. The rest of our lives may redeem the past. Only get well, as Willy says."

Gently he disengaged the child from her

arms and led him out of the room, and her kind nurse closed the curtains, and, exhausted with her emotions, Fanny fell asleep. At the first motion she made when she awoke, the nurse was by her side offering her some refreshment after sleep.

"You are Mrs. Hawkins," said Fanny.

"Yes, ma'am I am," answered the nurse.

"And is it you that have watched by me night and day during my long illness, taking no rest yourself?"

"God has given me strength to do my duty, and I thank him for it."

"I have never deserved anything at your hands, and you have been as kind to me as if you had been my mother."

"I have only done what I ought to do."

"But your tenderness, and kindness — I had no right to it."

"Yes you had, for you were a great sufferer and I was able to help you."

"But I had sinned against you," said Fanny, as the tears rolled down her face. "I had laughed at your appearance, I had nicknamed you."

"You hurt yourself more than you did me by that. I know I am an odd-looking person. I pitied you, and so I helped to nurse you."

"Do you always return good for evil?"

"When I can."

"Did you not despise me when I was so rude to you?"

"I despise no human being."

"You puzzle me; you seem so contented and yet have nothing to 'joy; what makes you so satisfied?"

"A quiet conscience, and the pleasure I find in doing the work that God gives me to do. He gives us all our work."

"What work do you think he has given to you?"

"The care of the sick."

"And are you not wearied and disheartened with this work sometimes?"

"Never."

"Do you not hope some day to rest from these hard labors, and enjoy your own time, and the recollection of how much good you have done?"

"Yes, in heaven."

"I have been very unjust to you," said Fanny; "I ought to have reverenced your self-devotion, and loved you instead of laughing at you."

"Love can't be forced," answered the housekeeper.

"Will you forgive me for all my injustice to you?"

"With all my heart," replied Mrs. Hawkins.

"You say," said Fanny, who was irresistibly induced to talk to her new friend, as she considered her, "you say God gives to all their work; what work do you think he has given me?"

"It is a part of the duty of a child to find out his father's wishes, and ask of him what is his work. Each one must answer that question for himself. You have great means, and can do much."

"I am very grateful to you for all your kindness to me," said Fanny with a trembling voice, "and most of all for pardoning my injustice and rudeness towards you."

"I do not want people to feel grateful to me," answered Mrs. Hawkins.

"You mean that you would rather be loved than be thanked; your own heart must be full of love to have watched by me, and labored and suffered for my relief and comfort, when I deserved nothing but blame at your hands; and I shall, I will, I do love you, my good and kind, and forgiving friend. You will let me love you."

The tear trickled on the eyelid of Mrs. Hawkins as she said, "God has made all our hearts for love, and we all crave it. In his own good time he will give to each one his share ; I am willing to wait. But you must not talk any more, dear ; it will hurt you." Her voice quivered with emotion as she uttered these words, and Fanny was silent.

The whole of her past life now became present, painfully present to Fanny's recovered mind. She was still too weak to discuss any painful subject ; and her husband's only object was to calm and cheer the present moment. It was with mingled pain and pleasure that he heard her continually repeat, " You do then love me, William ? "

" Better than my own life, dear Fanny," he would answer.

" And you will not leave me ? "

" Never while you wish me to remain with you."

" How is my dear Amy ? has nothing been heard from her ? " asked Fanny, " I pray that her precious life may have been spared ; if she had been able to come she would have been with me in that terrible fever, I know."

Her husband told her that the day after she was taken ill, he had received a letter

from his friend Selmar, announcing the birth of a daughter, and that Amy and her child were doing very well.

"How long ago was that?" asked Fanny.

"Five weeks, my dear Fanny."

"Then it is now spring, and Amy promised me to come and see me in the spring, if she should be the happy mother of a living child."

"And she is coming in a fortnight," replied her husband, "if you are well enough to bear the excitement of seeing her."

"Oh joy! joy!" exclaimed Fanny; "I will be well enough. I am sure I shall be quite strong by that time, never fear, dear William; write to her directly to come, and her husband, and baby: oh beautiful! To see Amy would seem to me like gathering hearts-ease again in my mother's garden, when she and I were children, and used to dress ourselves up and play ancient statues. She was fond of playing Flora, and I Minerva, and it was then that I first saw you William, a great raw school-boy; and how you laughed at the owl on my head. Oh if Amy had always been with me I should have been a better wife to you."

"Let us remember the sorrows and mistakes of the past, only that we may take care

to avoid them ; and let us cherish the recollection of all its pure pleasures, as a pledge and promise of what is in store for us. We will call up again those sweet dreams of our early days, dear Fanny, by returning to that child-like trust and unquestioning love which then made us so happy. But you must not talk any more, your pulse is much too quick ; while we have been talking, it has beaten faster and faster, till now I can scarcely count it. You will not be able to see Amy in a fortnight, if you do not keep quieter than you have been for these last few minutes.”

“ Oh but I will be very still, so quiet, and so good that you shall not believe it is I; only write to Amy to come, and tell her that I shall be quite well, and so tranquil and good that even she will scarcely know her old friend.”

After a few moments of thoughtful silence, Fanny suddenly said, “ I think, William, I should like to write to Amy myself.”

“ But you are hardly able to write, Fanny.” Fanny insisted very earnestly that she was able, and that it was only a few lines that were necessary. Her husband proposed that she should dictate and he write.

“ No, no, I must write myself; give me some paper, and pen, and ink.”

"Presently," replied her husband, "when you are rested I will ;" but he looked as if he would rather not. When Fanny wrote her letter which was very short, she folded and sealed it as soon as it was finished. Her husband was sitting by her, and it was with rather an effort at gaiety he said, "you asked for no message from me, Fanny, but have hastily sealed up your letter as if it contained treason." Fanny blushed and looked disturbed.

"One always looks like a fool when showing a letter of one's own writing, and I can never forget a lady's telling me when I showed her a letter which she asked to see, 'It's a very good letter, but if I had been you I would not have shown it.' "

Mr. Roberts was evidently disappointed ; his reserve which had lately been dissipated by Fanny's frankness and tenderness began to creep over him again. Both were silent. It seemed as if some mysterious invisible evil presence had suddenly disturbed their peace.

CHAPTER XIX.

“There is a rose-lipped seraph sits on high,
Who ever bends his holy ear to earth,
To mark the voice of penitence, to catch
Her solemn sighs, to tune them to his harp,
And echo them, in harmonies divine,
Up to the throne of grace.”

MASON.

WE return to Edward and Amy. When the bustle and trouble of moving were over, and they were all established in their very comfortable but less elegant house, Edward and Amy came to the conclusion, that, as far as their individual happiness was in question, they were better off than before; as their present style of living left them more time for reading and for the enjoyment of each other's society. Mr. Weston prophesied that the men of property and standing in society would now forsake them entirely; that the world would never forgive such a departure from its own principles; and he thought that, in some respects, they deserved the censure and neglect that they would surely encounter.

Mr. Weston, to imitate his own style of speaking, was right in some respects. Some of the rich forsook them ; others treated them with increased respect and attention. Ruth, whose opinion ought not to be neglected, said, after they were all arranged, that she did not see what they wanted of more money ; that enough was as good as a feast ; and that, as far as she knew of such things, she had observed that great gains and great pains went together.

Calmly and cheerfully, and with a holy trust, that, whether she lived or died, it would be well with her, Amy met her trying hour ; and, as has been before mentioned, she became the joyful mother of a living child. With a yet more solemn earnestness than they had ever before felt, did these happy parents consecrate themselves anew to God, as, with tears of joyful love, they thanked him for this unspeakable blessing.

“ What system do you mean to follow, in educating your daughter ? ” said Edward, one day ; “ authority or reason — persuasion or force ? What punishments have you already planned ? What great book shall you keep on your work-table, all ready to refer to ? ”

"The punishments," replied Amy, laughing, "I shall leave to you. Suppose we make a plan, as the children make stories, as we go along? One thing we will surely do, Edward; study this exquisite instrument before we play upon it. The great book of nature, with its living pictures, is always open, and we will teach her to read in it with us; and from the book of life, the word of God, we will gather, day by day, lessons, which, even before she can find them there herself, if we are but faithful, her heart will read in our example. This is my system."

In answer to Edward's letter, informing Mr. Roberts of the birth of their child, he received a letter from him, telling him of the death of his father, and the dangerous illness of his wife. Anxiously and with an aching heart did Amy open every letter from New York, till that came, giving the blessed news of the safety of her friend, and of her restoration to reason.

The weeks passed rapidly, and Fanny's letter arrived, saying she was well enough to see her friend, and urging her to come immediately. A short postscript was added to it, requesting Amy to bring all the letters which

she had received from her since her residence in New York.

All Amy's arrangements for leaving home were made, and Ruth had come to receive her parting directions, as the next day was to make her sole manager.

"Are you not afraid, ma'am, to go to-morrow?" said Ruth, with a portentous look.

"Why, Ruth, should I fear going to-morrow?"

"You know it says in the almanac, that there will be an eclipse of the sun."

"Then I shall have a fine opportunity of seeing it, in the steam-boat. Why, Ruth, should we fear an eclipse?"

"I am no coward, ma'am. I have lived too long in the woods to be scared at an owl; but I never saw any good come of eclipses, or comets neither; and I do feel a kind o' chicken-hearted about your going, Mrs. Selmar, that's a fact; and I shall feel dreadful lonesome without you and the dear babe."

Amy replied, that they should return in a few days. She gave her some further directions, and told her that she had nothing more to say. "I know you will take good care of my father, Ruth. I trust all to you."

Ruth still lingered. It was evident she

had something weighing heavily on her mind. At last, she took courage, and began.

"There is something else that I feel rather ugly about, ma'am. I wanted just to speak a word to you about it before you went; but I am afraid you 'll think it ridiculous."

"What is it, Ruth?" said Amy, very kindly.

"Why, ma'am," said Ruth, hanging her head one side, and pulling out her fingers, one after another, to their full length, "you know the old saying, There 's ne'er a Jack without a Jill; and Jerry has somehow or other thrown dust in my eyes, so that I don't see but what, for want of a better, I may about as well take up with him for a beau."

Amy found it hard to keep her countenance during this explanation.

"Do you mean, Ruth, that you intend to marry Jerry?"

"I know it seems ridiculous, ma'am; but I have, if the upshot of it must be told, come to the conclusion, that I might go further, and fare worse; and I have as good as told Jerry so."

"But, do you love Jerry, Ruth?"

"Why, I guess I kind o' love him. I tell him that bad 's the best of the men-folks;

but I rather guess I set more by him than by any other of his species, though he is so short."

"But, are you sure, Ruth, that you shall be happier with Jerry than you are with me? Do you love him enough to trust yourself to him?"

"Why, ma'am, nothing in life is certain but death; but I feel sure enough for my own satisfaction; and, you know, nothing venture, nothing have. The long and the short of it is, if you approve, I expect I shall marry Jerry."

"I shall certainly be sorry to lose you, Ruth; but, if you are really attached to Jerry, and feel sure that you will be happier with him, I shall be very glad for your sake. But a woman ought to be very cautious to whom she binds herself for life."

"Yes, ma'am," said Ruth. "I have always thought that the girls who marry, as some of our girls do, your outlandish foreigners, who have no manners, were served right for their folly; but Jerry is one of our own folks."

"It seems to me, Ruth," said Amy, "I have heard you laugh at Jerry."

"That, ma'am, is one way I try whether a beau suits me. If he won't let me have

my own way, in the matter of talking and laughing, how should he in any other? And the truth is, he is as patient as Job with me, when I take to my funning ways."

"But I hope, Ruth, that is not your object in marrying Jerry,—to have your own way. He may also like his way, and you will quarrel."

"We shall both have our own way, ma'am. It takes two to make a quarrel, and I never mean to be one. I guess we shall be peaceable enough. I always thought it was ridiculous for married folks to quarrel."

"Is Jerry a religious man, Ruth?"

"You may be sure enough of that, ma'am, or I should never have taken a shine to him. It's not a fair bargain between man and wife, when one lives for time, and the other for eternity."

"And you are sure, Ruth, that you have well considered what you are doing, in promising to marry Jerry?" asked Amy:

"My maxim, ma'am," said Ruth, "is, be slow in choosing a friend, but slower still in giving him up."

Amy perceived that Ruth's mind was made up; and as she believed Jerry was a good fellow, and as she saw that Ruth was really

attached to him, she not only expressed her approbation, which she knew was what Ruth desired, but the great pleasure she felt at the thought that she would have a faithful and affectionate friend, who would stand by her through life.

Amy and her husband and child arrived safely, at the appointed time, at New York ; and the friends met with that indescribable, almost painful delight which we ever feel at meeting with one whom we have loved from our earliest childhood, and from whom we have fondly thought and hoped, in our childish faith, never to part.

“ I shall call my baby Fanny,” said Amy, as her friend pressed it to her heart.

“ Heaven grant it may be wiser than her for whom she is called,” answered Fanny.

Selmar and Roberts were rejoiced to meet again, after so long an absence. It was a general holiday in the house. Even Mrs. Hawkins said a great many things that, on another occasion, and upon further consideration, she would have called superfluous. And as for Willy, he was like a canary-bird at a dinner party,—singing, dancing, clapping his hands, and chattering without heeding that no one answered. The baby he called his little sister, and its mother his own aunt.

The friends had a deal of talk about every thing, beginning, as friends are apt to, who have much on their hearts, with what they cared the least for. Fanny was anxious to know if Amy had brought her letters ; and Amy was equally anxious to ascertain if Fanny was happier than when she last wrote to her ; but neither spoke for some time. At last, Fanny began.

“ I hope you have brought my foolish letters, Amy. I believe you must have thought I was crazed when I wrote them, or perhaps trying my hand at novel-writing.”

“ I have brought all your letters, dear. And now tell me, all jesting apart, are you happy ? ”

“ O yes,” replied Fanny ; “ happy as the day is long. But I must tell you all first.” And she went back, and, with much pain, told Amy all that had passed till the present time. “ And now,” she continued, “ I want to burn all those letters, and forget all that has passed.”

“ But, have you told your husband all that you felt, Fanny ? ”

“ O no. Why should I ? It would only give him pain.”

“ But do you not see that you are doing

now the very thing that caused the estrangement between you and Roberts?"

"How?" said Fanny.

"Do you think," said Amy, "that if you had been perfectly open and confiding to your husband, he would have been cold and reserved to you?"

"How could I be frank with him, when he was so silent to me? How could I tell him that his chilling, solemn reserve, when he was displeased, hurt me more than any censure, and that I would rather he would find fault with me every hour in the day? He would have thought me a fool."

"And yet," answered Amy, "if you do not tell him all this, you will never be happy."

"Yes I shall; for I shall be more careful not to do wrong, and then he will not be displeased; and he has promised that all shall be forgotten; and I am sure he does love me as well or better than ever."

"And yet, believe me, Fanny, the same thing will take place again, unless a perfect understanding is established between you. The flame of discontent is smothered, not extinguished."

"O, I should die, he knows I should die, if he were to leave me, or if he ever were to

appear towards me again as he has this last winter. But I shall never give him occasion to find fault with me."

"Impossible," answered Amy. "Even now, I doubt not, he begins to wonder why you treated him as you say you did. You must be open as the day with your husband, Fanny, or your happiness is gone. You must tell him all that you thought and felt, said or did. You must not keep back your opinion of his faults; you must not extenuate your own. You must be perfectly true with him."

"But you see, Amy, it is all over now; and we are so happy!"

"There is a root of bitterness in all your happiness," replied Amy, "while anything remains between you unexplained, untold. There is a hidden wound in your love, if aught remains unspoken of; it can only be healed by being laid bare. If there exist anything between you too painful to be spoken of, think you that this tender spot will never be touched by accident, or by the same cause that first excited it?"

"He will blame me, when he knows all I have felt and said to you, Amy."

"No matter, my dear friend. You have

nearly made shipwreck of all your peace in this life, by the very system of concealment which you are now madly commencing again. Believe me, that if your love for each other cannot bear the test of a perfectly frank and fearless confession of all your faults, all your mistakes; if it does not rest on truth, perfect truth, its foundation is rotten, and this is but a transient respite from the misery that surely awaits you."

"Can I do this?" said Fanny. "Can I go over the hateful past, and call up those terrible hours, that I am trying to forget?"

"Look, Fanny, at the cause of all your misery, and you will find it was not any very wrong thing that either of you did; not a want of love, but it was a want of trust in each other—a want of truth. Each was playing a part, till each became convinced that the real character was lost in the assumed one. Your love for each other could not grow, thus smothered and warped; it has barely survived. Could you daily, and, as the Christian wife should, with every passing moment, give thanks, in your heart, to God, for the possession of a friend to whom you are perpetually false?"

"O, not false, Amy; that is too hard."

"Yes, false, Fanny. You must, in such a relation, be perfectly true in every thing, or you are false."

While Fanny and Amy were talking, Mr. Roberts came in. Fanny unconsciously put the letters, that were lying on the table, out of sight. Her husband observed it, and looked embarrassed and hurt. The ladies were silent, at his entrance.

"I fear that I am an intruder," he said. "You have, perhaps, some private affairs." This was said in a constrained tone; and he rather abruptly left the room.

"He saw me hide these foolish letters, and supposed that there really was some important secret between us," said Fanny, in a fretful tone, and half speaking to herself. "It's a pity he came in."

"And is there not some important secret hidden from your husband?" replied Amy. "Have you not something on your heart, and in your thoughts, which you think you cannot say to him? And can you bear the reality, while you are annoyed and pained at the mere appearance?"

"O, but it was foolish in Roberts to be so troubled by such a trifle. These letters might have related only to your concerns."

"He would naturally wonder, then, why you did not say so — why you should hide them. He would know that you could not suppose he would look at any letters unbidden. Were you not afraid that he would recognize your hand-writing?"

"It is true," said Fanny; "and I am sorry they were not burnt immediately."

"And will you carry that about in your heart, which you would, when on paper, desire to burn, and yet call yourself a true, and loving, and happy wife, Fanny?"

"But I am a true, and loving, and shall be a happy wife, if my husband will not have this foolish, jealous sensitiveness about trifles."

"But the fact is, that he is sensitive, and that you know he is, Fanny. A man like Roberts, whose love is so tender, so refined, so elevated, cannot be satisfied with an affection which would, perhaps, satisfy a coarser mind. He wants an entire love, an entire trust — entire truth. He cannot bear to be doubted, or feared, or separated from his wife, even in trifles."

"I do not fear him. I know that he would forgive me for anything that ought to be forgiven."

"Yes you do, Fanny; you fear that he will discover what you have yet been willing to say to me. I think you have given your husband reason to complain of you, and to be jealous of your affections, within this hour."

"He has never said this to me," replied Fanny, thoughtfully.

"In that he has been wrong, and you should say so to him; but he may have thought that unless this perfect confidence were voluntary it was worth nothing."

"But would you have me tell my husband every thing I say and do, and feel, and have done or said and felt, Amy?"

"Yes, every thing that he can wish to know; nothing is a trifle if he can care for it. You should have but one heart between you."

"How can I be good enough to show my whole foolish heart, my whole whimsical and faulty character to my husband; what will he think when he really sees me as I am?"

"If," replied Amy, "he finds in your heart an entire love for himself, a perfect devotion to truth, and an earnest desire to cure all your faults, to be excellent; if he finds that

you hunger and thirst after perfection, rely upon it that even your faults will form another bond of union between you. There is nothing so touching to a generous mind, as that entire trust, which induces a loving heart to pour out to another all its weaknesses, all its errors, even all its sins. We love each other not so much for what we are as for what we would be. It is that divine beau ideal which each one who aspires after excellence carries within, which is the real being. Would you hide this from your husband? No, Fanny, I know you would not; and its first and most unquestioned feature is a renunciation of that self-love which would hide or vindicate our follies or our faults."

Fanny made no answer; but her eyes glistened, and Amy thought she saw some noble purpose working in her heart, and she left her. A few moments after, Fanny sent for her husband.

"Are you at leisure?" she said, "I have something I wish to say to you."

"Quite, Fanny; but from your looks I fear it is something painful, and I think excitement is bad for your health."

"Never mind that," replied Fanny; there are things more important than health, or life,

William ; and I have come to the conclusion that you and I must speak of them." Her husband looked much troubled, and waited for her to proceed.

" We have not been as happy, William; as we ought to have been together, certainly as we hoped to be ; have we ? "

" Let us not speak of the past, Fanny ; I cannot bear it." Fanny was resolved to proceed.

" If we cannot bear to speak of it, how can we bear to think of it ? Shall we carry that in our hearts which we cannot trust to our lips ? "

" But what is the use of it Fanny ? "

" That we may, by confessing and understanding our mistakes learn to correct them. I have been the most faulty, William : no one who does not see our hearts can tell who has suffered most ; but Heaven knows I have suffered enough."

" I hoped I had been the greatest, the only sufferer ; but let us not talk of such painful things, it will destroy you, Fanny ; I will not consent to it, and I cannot bear it."

" If I die," answered his wife, " all must now be said, all must be told to the last word, all confessed to the veriest trifle. You

must bear it, let it be ever so painful, and I must speak if these should be my last words. Amy is right ; our love has a rotten foundation if we have anything between us that may not be spoken of. I will make a clean breast to you now, if I never have before."

" Dear Fanny, we have suffered too much ; all is now as if it had never been ; there is no danger that we shall commit the same faults."

" Within this hour we have both committed the same faults that have caused all our misery. I tried to hide these letters, and you were hurt, and you did not tell me so. This was untrue in me, and not right in you." Fanny then reminded her husband of the letter she wrote to Amy, and asked him if he were not hurt at her not showing it to him. He confessed he was. " Then why," said Fanny, " did you not say so ? "

" I feared to give you pain."

" Very like," said Fanny, " I should not then have told you the truth ; but henceforward I promise to speak the truth to you, cost what it may ; and I have a right, William, to demand the same of you. It will be our only security for happiness. What I wished to hide from you, William, was a postscript

to my letter to Amy, asking her to bring me all the letters I had written to her since our marriage. There they are, and Amy's answers. I meant to burn them; but Amy has convinced me that I had better tell you everything, and show them to you first; take them, and read them all."

Fanny then gave her husband the letters. While he was reading she was perfectly silent. When he had finished, she told him calmly all she had endured from his silence, his reserve, and finally, from the conviction that he did not love her. She told him of everything she had thought and felt. Her husband heard her in profound silence; but his rising color, and his quivering lip showed how deeply he was moved. At last, as she spoke of her sufferings, he bowed his head, and covered his face with his hands, and groaned out, "Oh, Fanny, can you indeed forgive me? I have been unfaithful to my marriage vow; I have sinned against my own heart, and against you in the sight of God."

"We have both sinned," sobbed out Fanny; "but the future is before us, let us do so no more."

"Had I been open, and trustful, and true —

had my love been what it ought to have been, Fanny, all this misery would have been saved."

"Let us be true and faithful for the future," said Fanny, as her head fell like that of a wearied and repentant child on her husband's bosom.

"Henceforward," he said, and pressed her to his heart, "we will do better; henceforward we will be true to each other. We cannot have perfection, but we may have truth, we may have real love.

"What a load is off my heart!" said Fanny, as she finished telling Amy of what had passed between her and her husband. "I feel so calm, so fearless, so sweetly peaceful. Bless you, dear Amy, for your truly faithful and wise counsel; you have saved me from misery, from worse than death."

Mr. Selmar's business allowed of only a short stay, and he and Amy returned with their hearts overflowing with joy, at having witnessed the return of health and peace to the abode of their friends.

CHAPTER XX.

“ ‘T is summer, glorious summer—
Look to the glad green earth,
How from her grateful bosom
The herb and flower spring forth.
These are her rich thanksgivings ;
Their incense floats above.

Father ! what may we offer ?
Thy chosen flower is—*love*. ”

LOUISA PARK.

It was near sunset, on a fine day, in the latter part of spring, when some travellers slowly ascended a long steep hill. The party consisted of a gentleman, and his wife, and a little girl of about three years of age. They were walking, in order to relieve the horse of their weight, while he was slowly dragging up their light travelling carriage.

“ Poor old Robinette is so tired ; let him rest on the top of the hill,” said the father of the little girl who was impatient to get in, and find herself going again.”

“ But Willy is waiting for me,” said the child, as she threw back her golden ringlets,

and looked up in her father's face ; "Willy wants to see his little Fanny."

" You will soon see him," replied her mother. " Look Fanny at that pretty blue smoke curling up out of that green wood in the valley ; and see that pretty white house. At the window, shining like gold with the light of the setting sun, I think I see a little boy about Willy's age."

" Yes ! yes ! it is he — oh now he is gone. Mother, mother," continued the child, " the water looks as if it was on fire ; and see how many flowers are on the trees : will not Willy give me as many as I want ? he has so many."

It was the time of the apple-blossoms, and the whole country looked like a flower-garden ; the air was loaded with their delicious perfume. At the foot of the hill upon which the travellers stood, contemplating the scene below, ran a wild mountain stream, through a narrow valley. Scattered along its beautifully wooded banks were the villagers' houses, and rising up from the midst of them was a small white church ; the glittering weather-cock on its spire caught the last rays of the sun, as it seemed to bid a reluctant farewell to the quiet scene below.

"Hark ! Fanny, hear the water-fall !" said the father of the little girl, whose incessant chattering made it almost impossible to hear any thing else ; "and hear the birds singing their go-to-bed-songs ; and hark ! that is the bell from the factory, calling the workmen and women and children all to their suppers, and telling them that their labor is done."

"See all the factory people," said the mother, "see them, Fanny, through the trees running along by the little foot-path on the side of the hill, so glad to go home."

"That is Willy running up the hill, mother ; is it not ? Oh let me get out again," said little Fanny, as they began to descend.

"We will take him in, if it is he," said her father. In a minute they came up to him.

"What is your name, my little fellow ?" said the gentleman.

"Willy Roberts ; and are not you uncle Edward, and aunt Amy Selmar, and little Fanny ?"

"Yes, we are ;" and in another moment the child was in their arms.

"Go fast," said the boy ; "father and mother do n't know you have come. I saw you on the top of the hill from the upper chamber window, and thought I would come

and see if it was you, and run and tell them first. They are in the piazza on the other side of the house, that looks out on the river."

"Father! mother! here is my little sister Fanny, and uncle, and aunt Selmar, and Robinette;" screamed out Willy, as they stopped at the door; and in an instant the friends were clasped in each others' arms. "Dear Amy!" "Dear Fanny!" was all the two cousins could say for some time. At last Fanny looked round for her little namesake. She was no where to be seen; Willy had appropriated her to himself, and had gone to show her the pigs, and the poultry-yard, the old dog, and his new wagon and hoe, the cow-yard, and the garden. Little Fanny, to whom all these were novelties, was in an ecstasy at everything she saw. Willy, who was so familiar with them all, and who always said our pigs, our chickens, our cow, was in her estimation as great a hero as ever was the most valiant and successful knight in the days of yore, in the eyes of his admiring mistress. When the mothers found the children, Fanny was standing with her bosom stuck full of dandelions, apple-blossoms and violets, and a bunch of lilacs dangling from her belt, looking up into Willy's face with

her great laughing blue eyes wide open, and full of solemn wonder, and almost oppressive delight, listening to a grand story Willy was telling her of a battle between the turkey cock and himself, in which Willy was of course the brave and triumphant conqueror.

"Come and speak to your aunt Fanny," said Amy to her little girl ; the child turned, and after one look held up her face for a kiss.

"Call her mother, as I do," said Willy ; "because you know you are my little sister ; but come and see my little brother ; he shall be your brother too." And away they ran into the house and up to the nursery to see the baby. Tears came into Amy's eyes. Fanny observed them, and said, "Come and see my flower-garden ; it is not quite dark." She wished to divert Amy's thoughts ; but they were precious thoughts to Amy that had brought tears into her eyes, and she said to her friend, "I wish, Fanny, you had seen our little Edward ; he was a lovely thing, and the remembrance of him is very dear to us ; for worlds I would not part with it."

"This is what I expected from you, Amy ; your faith I know is a reality. How did your husband bear the loss of his little boy ? "

"Do not say lost. Our little Fanny, with all

the visible signs of life, hardly seems a more real an existence to us both, than does our sweet angel baby."

"But how could you bear the parting?"

"It was very hard, Fanny; and we wept as parents must weep. My heart was very lonely for a while, when my vacant arms found no infant to press to it; and now when I hear the words little brother, and think of my little girl left without her natural friend and playmate, I sorrow for her sake even more than our own; for to us the child lives, and is still a blessing to us."

Amy spoke with the same trustful serenity upon this subject as she did upon others. Fanny felt that her religion was a truth, and therefore a source of joy; not a mournful refuge from sorrow when no other happiness is within reach. It was to her the vital principle of peace and gladness, the daily bread of a satisfied heart.

"It does me good," said Fanny, "to hear you speak so; I know that you think it right and wish to feel so; but to see that you really do, now that the trial has come, that strengthens my faith, Amy, more than all arguments."

"Let us follow the children, and see the baby;" said Amy.

"Mother," said little Fanny, "the baby looks like brother, and has the same name —Edward."

"You have no brother Edward," said Willy.

"Yes I have, Willy."

"Where is he? in Boston? Why did you not bring him?"

"Father and mother say that he is in heaven."

Willy was silent. He remembered what his mother had said to him of the death of his little cousin.

Tea was announced, and Willy ran to call the gentlemen.

Tea was over, the children were abed, and the birds were in their nests. The deep, full, pervading roar of the water-fall not far from the house, was the only sound that, like a low running bass, harmonized with the conversation of the four friends. "What do you think," said Fanny, "of my being the Goody of the village; I am the monitress, the Jack-at-a-pinch upon all occasions. If they have a quilting-match, they send for me to tell them stories and be agreeable to them; if a girl has an offer, the mother consults me; if any child is unruly, they ask my advice of the

best way to tame it. They come to me for recipes for making pickles, for curing beef, pork, disobedient children, and unruly horses. Only yesterday a good woman came here on horseback upon a man's saddle, on an old horse, and wanted me to get on and take a ride, and see if I could cure the wicked animal of tripping ; another comes to ask me for something strengthening for her stomach ; and since they have seen our nice medicine-chest, I should not be surprised if they were to come to me for pills against thunderstorms and earthquakes."

"Stop, stop, Fanny, this is not fair," said her husband ; "you are running away with all the honors of the place, and will have no breath even to relate mine. Am I not lawyer, doctor, and schoolmaster, of the place ? do n't they call me Squire, Dr., your Honor, Elder, Major, &c. &c.? I mean to have a gold-headed cane, and a larger hat, and try to look more respectable in your eyes at least, so that I need not be overlooked entirely, by you, my lady Bountiful."

"Fear not that I should forget you," said Fanny. "You and your committee men, your Lyceum gentlemen, your politicians, and your tribe of boys, leave marks enough on my

carpet to make it sure you will be remembered. When we go to walk, there is not a head of any description that does not nod to him as he passes, with a sort of hail-fellow-well-met look and manner. The boys pull the tail of his coat, some of the men almost slap him on his shoulder, others hold him by the button-hole, and I doubt not they will send him for their representative to Congress, and then he will be the honorable Mr. Roberts, and I Mrs. honorable."

"I confess," said Mr. Roberts, "that my estimate of this office, and of the people at large has changed since I left the city. In cities, public officers are chosen simply for their politics, in country towns, something more is required; if they are not moral and religious men, there are many who will not vote for them. My love and reverence for human nature has much increased during our residence in the country."

"Do tell them about the church steeple," said Fanny. "But where is Mrs. Hawkins? she is so modest she will very like think we do n't want her."

Fanny went out, and in a moment returned with the good housekeeper.

"Sit here, Mrs. Hawkins; you will love to hear the steeple story again, I know."

"Fanny," said Roberts, laughing, "makes me tell this story to everybody. A very poor man in our town, a carpenter, had contracted to build the steeple to our new church; it was to be raised up into its place after it was finished. The poor fellow expended in making it every farthing he could command, much of which was borrowed from his fellow-townsmen. It was completed according to the contract, it only wanted to be raised; the levers, and pulleys were all placed, the crowd were assembled, people had come from far and near, to witness the raising of the steeple. The carpenter's wife and eight children had the best place for seeing assigned to them. Very soon the steeple began to rise; it arrives safely at its place, it merely wants to be adjusted on its basis. As soon as that should be accomplished the carpenter, according to the contract, was entitled to his pay. The crowd were beginning to shout at its ascension, when a pulley gave way, then another, and in an instant the steeple fell to the ground, and became a shapeless mass of ruins."

"Oh the poor carpenter and his family," exclaimed Amy, "what did he do?"

"He was in utter despair; he sat down on

the ground and exclaimed, ‘ take us all to jail ; we are ruined ! ’ His children cried aloud, his wife tried to comfort him, but he covered his face and would not look up. I saw some of the leading men together, and went up to learn what they were talking of. I found they were proposing a subscription. As I passed through the crowd I heard one say, I ’ll give him the timber ; and another, I ’ll haul it ; another, I ’ll give him a week’s work, and in less than ten minutes the poor man’s loss was made up to him. This was too much for him ; he wept even more than at his loss, he could not articulate his thanks.”*

“ Surely,” said Edward “ that church can never be the scene of a more devout and acceptable service to the beneficent Being for whose worship it was erected.”

Amy’s eyes glistened with delight, as she said “ It was indeed a beautiful consecration.”

“ They only did what they ought to do,” said Mrs. Hawkins.

After much pleasant talk, the friends retired for the night.

The next morning, at breakfast, when they were planning the pleasures of the day, “ I

* A Fact.

speak for the children for a walk," said Edward Selmar, "I wish to have them to myself; Willy can show me the wonders of the place."

"That I can," said Willy, and began to tell beforehand of all there was to see.

"I speak for your company, Amy, for a walk such as we used to have when we were girls," said Fanny.

"Who 'll speak for me?" said Mr. Roberts.

"If you will not come too soon," said Fanny, "you may meet us upon the bridge below the falls, on our return; but we shall chat and lounge, and stroll along slowly. You are too consequential a person now to pass the whole morning among the rocks and trees; so we will not invite you."

"I do 'nt believe you want me, Fanny," said her husband.

"I do n't believe I do," said his wife sportively, but with a look of such confiding affection that the most jealous lover could not be hurt. "Amy and I shall have a long talk about everything, and among other things of course discuss our husbands; and rely upon it you will have your turn, and you—"

"Will not be much edified with your remarks," interrupted Mr. Roberts. "So fare-

well, ladies ; I leave my character to your mercy ; three hours hence I will walk to the old bridge to meet you."

"Follow me, Amy," said Fanny, "and I will show you my favorite spot, where I have passed many a joyful hour, and which to be perfect only wants the blessed idea of your presence to be added to its other charms. Often have I brought you here in the spirit, but I confess I do enjoy the visible appearance of those I love ; and it is a precious pleasure to me to sit by you, Amy, and have my arm around your waist as it used to be when we were school-mates. Those were happy days — were they not?"

"Not so happy as the present," said Amy.

"No ! no ! indeed. Then I dreamed and talked of joy ; now I feel it too deeply to speak of it to any one that I do not love as I love you, Amy."

"So you have told me in your letters very often ; but no words could be so eloquent as your every look, Fanny. It makes me very happy to see you, and, if possible, more so, to see your husband. He is a new creature."

"It does, indeed, seem like a new life to both of us.—But here is the spot, and this is the seat, where I love to sit in silence, or talk

with my husband, or sometimes sing all alone, for hours together."

It was on the smooth, pebbly shore, where they seated themselves upon an old, moss-grown tree, that had fallen partly into the stream.

"See this fairy bay," said Fanny. "Its happy waters seem to have stopped here while the rest of the stream hurries on — like loving hearts, that turn aside from the great current, to reflect in their glad bosoms the beauty of earth and the peace of heaven."

With their arms interlocked, the friends contemplated, in silence, the lovely scene around them.

"The wind was hushed,
And to the beach, each slowly lifted wave,
Creeping with silver curl, just kissed the shore,
And slept in silence."

Directly back of this little, sheltered nook rose a tall, rocky bank, shelving over it, as if to protect it from the storms. From its crevices dangled the bright, gay blossoms of the columbine, heavy with the morning dew. On the top grew a graceful young hemlock, waving its pliant branches and small, brown cones with every breath of wind, looking like a feather in the crest of a giant. Oppo-

site, arose steep, thickly-wooded banks ; the trees just putting forth their tender leaves and green tassels, were ringing with the song of birds building their nests. Far up, they had a glimpse of the fall, gleaming like silver in the early sun, while its unceasing sound fell in softened murmurs upon the ear. Amy looked up at the spring-flowers drooping over her head, and remembered

“The fair creature from her bosom gone,
With life’s first flowers just opening in its hand,
And all the lovely thoughts and dreams unknown,
Which in its clear eye shone,
Like the spring’s wakening.”

Amy wept, but not as without hope. Never was her conviction stronger, her faith more real, than at that moment of tender remembrance.

After a long silence, Fanny said to her, “ You see, dear Amy, how happy we are ; and you must rejoice to think that you were the means of saving us from misery.”

“ No, no,” said Amy ; “ no one can do such a work for another. I helped you, perhaps ; I pointed out the way, at the time ; but, had you not been determined to do right, my help would have been in vain.”

“ I do believe,” replied Fanny, “ that, but

for the decision I made that morning, in consequence of your advice and entreaty to be simple, and true, and open-hearted to my husband, to have no disguises whatever with him, we should now be as miserable as we are happy. It was a long while before we formed those habits of perfect, transparent confidence and truth which now are no longer an effort. We had both to put aside our peculiar faults. I had to be willing to confess I was wrong, to bear to be blamed, and to see myself, often, in a very ugly glass. He had to conquer his pride, to subdue his sensitiveness, and to put away his reserve. In short, we have both felt the importance and duty of loving excellence better than self; and now we are growing more and more in love with each other every day. All we want to make us perfectly happy is, to have you and Edward with us. Mrs. Hawkins is one of my best friends. I have made her promise never to wear green, and to add a quarter of a yard to the length of her gown."

Amy and Fanny related to each other their various experiences for the last three years. During that time, Amy's father had died. One of his last requests was, that he might

be laid in the tomb of a rich though distant relation of his wife's, where she had been interred. "If," said he, "I had not lost my property, I intended to have had a tomb of my own at Mount Auburn. All the first people are buried there. One does not wish, even in the grave, to be confounded with the mass." Amy did not herself relate to Fanny this proof of the strength of her father's ruling passion; but the sad expression that came over her face, when she spoke of his death, showed that there was a deeper sorrow connected with the memory of it than she was willing to confess.

The three hours passed rapidly with the friends, as they strolled along, chatting by the way, just as when they were girls; with this difference, that what was then a fancy or a golden dream, was real now; and that joys, which were then unthought of, formed the ground-work of their hopes.

Before they came to the old bridge, they met Mr. Roberts. His face beamed with pleasure, at the sight of his wife with the beloved friend of her childhood.

"Do you want me now, Fanny?" said he, gaily.

"Yes, we do," said she. "We have nothing more to say about you."

Soon the merry voices of the children rang through the woods ; they bounded, like fawns, at the sight of their mothers, Selmar running after them, gay and light-hearted as they.

When they met at dinner, all were full of glowing accounts of the pleasures of the morning.

"I love uncle Selmar," said Willy ; "he tells so many funny stories, and is so kind."

"You have not, Amy," said Fanny, "told me anything of my friend Ruth. How is she ? and where is she ? and what sort of a husband does Jerry make her ? "

"A very good one," replied Amy. "They live in a small house in the neighborhood of Boston. I went to see her, not long since, and she told me that she had a better husband than she or any other sinner deserved."

"Is she still as fond as ever of old proverbs ? "

"Quite. I had not been in the house ten minutes, before I heard her say, ' You know, ma'am, that it 's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. The poor old sexton is dead, and Jerry is chosen in his room ; and what he gets by the business helps us on, though it is not much to speak of. But many a little makes a mickle.' I asked her

if she was happy ; and her eyes sparkled as she answered, ‘ Happy, ma’am, as the day is long. Jerry is one of that sort that can turn his hand to anything ; nothing shiftless about him. All is grist that comes to his mill. There is no kind of chore but what he can do so much better than any one else, that every body employs him. He buries the dead, and waits upon the living ; keeps a singing-school, cobbles and blacks shoes. I call him jack at all trades, and good at none ; but, though I say it that should not say it, he is a real good husband, and provides well for his family.’ ”

When the time arrived for the Selmars to return, their friends urged them to promise that, at some future day, when Selmar’s property would allow him to leave business, they would come and join them in the country.

“ This would be a great indulgence,” answered Selmar ; “ but, with my present habits, and our views of duty, I doubt whether it would be so good for us. Nature is indeed beautiful, as you see it here ; these hills, this lovely glen, this river, this wilderness of flowers, and the music of your birds, and, above all, your dear selves ; but all this, to Amy and me, would be luxurious indul-

gence. The human soul, with all its heights and depths, its rough, and deep, and discordant tones, and its sweet, immortal music, its deformities and its deathless beauties, must be the field in which we labor. There we are apparently placed by our great Task-master, and there we think we shall find our happiness. I have an ambition which many will call romantic, but which glorious evidences have been given is not a chimera. It is, to prove that a merchant, yes, a money-making merchant, may be an imitator of Jesus, as truly and as faithfully as another man, in spite of the real difficulties and the apprehended dangers that beset him on every side. This seems to me to be my mission. I have some notion that the travelling Samaritan, who, when the priest and the Levite turned aside, stopped to bind up the wounds of him who had fallen among thieves, was a merchant; and Amy and I have resolved to devote my surplus gains, with the help of God, to the good of our fellow-men. I have to-day, Roberts, been in your village; and what I have heard there has proved to me that your happiness here has arisen from the very same source. All had some story to tell me of your kindness, and of the

efforts you make to do them good. While your words invite me to stay here, your example bids me go home, and imitate you in the sphere in which I am placed, only hoping that I may be as successful a laborer in the great vineyard."

They bade each other a tender farewell. It was hard to part; but their visit had been most happy, and they promised to come again next year.

Edward returned to his business with a new zeal for the accumulation of wealth, that he might be enabled to enjoy the luxury of changing tears of sorrow to tears of joy, and of helping to make barren, desert minds blossom like the rose — to kindle in the dead eye of him who was without hope, a light which should never be extinguished. All of his earnings beyond a certain sum, which he set aside for the support and real good of his family, he solemnly dedicated to works of beneficence; not to a useless and enervating almsgiving, but to intelligent, thoughtful, consistent methods to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, by enabling them to raise themselves to a dignified independence. He joined in every effort for the diffusion of knowledge and general education; and, above all,

he gave his mind, his time, as well as his money, for the advancement of the great cause of human freedom—of a true Christian brotherhood throughout the world. In all these duties and pleasures, Amy was his intimate adviser and efficient helpmate, his equal partner, his best friend. The fulfilment of this plan of life called upon them for much self-denial. There were many beautiful, many desirable things they relinquished for the sake of the higher pleasure, which they had chosen. They found so much peace and satisfaction in their choice, that it was apparent, that, with the good vicar of blessed memory, “while some men gazed with admiration at the colors of a tulip, and others were smitten with the wing of a butterfly, so were they, by nature, admirers of happy human faces.”

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